

gay

APRIL 10-16, 1988

VOLUME 15

NO 38

COMMUNITY NEWS

BIPAD: 65498

\$1.00

FOR FIFTEEN YEARS, THE LESBIAN AND GAY WEEKLY

Latina lesbian prof banned by Rutgers

Luz Maria Umpierre, who has filed a discrimination suit against the New Jersey school, claims the university will not let her return to campus unless she undergoes psychiatric tests

By Chris Bull

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. — In her continuing struggle against the Rutgers University administration, Luz Maria Umpierre, tenured associate professor of Puerto Rican and Hispanic Caribbean Studies since 1978, was suspended and barred from entering the campus on March 1.

Umpierre, a faculty advisor to the Gay and Lesbian Caucus for the Modern Languages, told *GCN* that when she called in sick recently administration officials at the university demanded that she undergo a psychiatric evaluation before returning to her duties. Umpierre refused and was promptly suspended with pay midway through the semester. She said the administration threatened to call campus police to have her arrested if she set foot on campus.

Umpierre said the administration's demand that she undergo a psychiatric examination was an attempt to discredit her political activity on campus. She said such a request by the administration was "unprecedented" and violates her contract with the school.

Rutgers spokesperson Amy Melvin told *GCN* that Umpierre was on "sick leave" and denied that the administration had asked her to undergo a psychiatric evaluation.

Last March, Umpierre filed a discrimination complaint against the school with the New Jersey Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), charging harassment on the basis of her race and sexual orientation. (See *GCN* Vol. 14, No. 46) Umpierre was twice unfairly passed over for the position of chairperson of the department in favor of a man, and she was subjected to sexual harassment, according to the complaint.

EEOC hearings are scheduled for next

month, according to Umpierre. Umpierre could not comment on the possibility of a lawsuit against the university. Lawyers for both sides in the dispute are currently negotiating, she said.

Umpierre explained that the university administration found the excuse they were looking for to get rid of her when she called in sick. She said the administration assumes anyone who challenges the widespread racism, sexism and homophobia on campus "must be crazy.... It's all because I filed charges against them. It's a habit, they always retaliate against people who challenge them."

Several faculty members close to Umpierre declined to comment on the case. One professor who wished to remain anonymous told *GCN* that other faculty members feared reprisals from the administration if they spoke out.

Students loyal to Umpierre are boycotting classes taught by a substitute. Maria Garzon, spokesperson for the student group supporting Umpierre, said the administration has given them "the run-around," — refusing to answer questions about Umpierre's status. She said that a course titled "Literature and Culture of the Caribbean" is now being taught by a man who told the class Argentina was part of the Caribbean. "I don't know what map he is using," said Garzon. She added that attendance is down by at least one-half.

"We paid our tuition and signed a contract to take courses with her because she is an excellent professor who cares deeply about her students," said Garzon. "The administration is not living up to its end of the bargain." Many student are risking their

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Luz Maria Umpierre



Pictured: Rhodessa Jones (R) and Idris Ackamoore in *The Legend of Lily Overstreet*

women on stage

BOSTON'S FOURTH FEST
IN THIS WEEK'S CENTER

San Francisco considers domestic partners legislation again

Will the post-Feinstein era yield better prospects for gay Supervisor Harry Britt's bill?

By Miranda Kolbe

SAN FRANCISCO — Six years after former Mayor Dianne Feinstein vetoed his original "domestic partners" legislation, Supervisor Harry Britt has come up with a proposal which, he says, "will put the committed relationships of thousands of San Francisco's unmarried [heterosexual and gay] couples on more equal footing with those of married couples."

Britt's proposal aims to enable unmarried domestic partners to receive benefits accorded to spouses under worker's health, retirement and life insurance plans. The proposal would also allow unmarried gay or heterosexual couples to take bereavement leave, as well as leave to take care of the child of a partner when an employer allows married couples to do so. Furthermore, Britt seeks to insure the rights of domestic partners to hospital and prison visitation — normally granted only to spouses and members of immediate families.

Under Britt's legislation, domestic partners are two people who live together and share basic living expenses — although not necessarily equally — and who are not related in such a way as to preclude marriage under California law. Britt expects his legislation, however, to dovetail with a proposal authored by Supervisor Wendy Nelder, which would allow benefits to be accorded to older relatives.

To qualify for the various benefits included in the legislation domestic partners would have to register with the city. If the couple chose to end their partnership, they would be required to file a termination notice. People would not be allowed to register with a new domestic partner until six months after the termination of a previous partnership.

The 1988 legislation differs from the 1982

proposal substantially, according to Britt. He said, "[The 1988 version] establishes the right to child care and bereavement leave for the first time.... [These benefits] would be available to people employed by private employers...." The new proposal also calls for a pilot program, in which a small group of domestic partners would receive health and retirement benefits in order to estimate the costs of this aspect of the proposal to the city.

Another significant difference, not mentioned by Britt, is that the equation between

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Harry Britt

Quote of the week

"To die with AIDS is to die without dignity, I've seen it in my hospice work. You are treated like a leper. To me it's worse than cancer, because cancer nurses don't come into your room with masks and gloves."

— Entertainer Eva Gabor (Lisa Douglas on TV's *Green Acres*) discussing her work with cancer patients and people with AIDS.



Ex-Arizona Governor Evan Meacham

Arizona Senate gives Meacham the boot

PHOENIX, AZ — Gov. Evan Meacham was removed from office on April 4 after the Arizona Senate found him guilty of two charges of misconduct. The ruling came a month into the impeachment trial of the ultraconservative governor who has raised ire across the political spectrum for his racist, sexist and homophobic positions. Meacham, the first U.S. governor to be impeached and removed from office in 59 years, was ousted on the 20th anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. — Meacham first drew wide criticism in January 1987 when he rescinded a state holiday to honor the slain civil rights leader.

The Republican-controlled Senate voted 21-9 to convict Meacham of attempting to thwart a death-threat investigation. Senators voted 26-4 to convict the governor of misusing \$80,000 of state funds in a loan to his auto dealership. A third charge — concealing a \$350,000 campaign loan — was dismissed by the Senate in late March. (Meacham still faces a criminal trial on all three counts later this month.)

A motion to bar Meacham from ever holding state office in Arizona fell three votes short of a two-thirds majority. It has yet to be decided whether Meacham may run again for the governorship in a special election slated for May 17. Meanwhile, Acting Gov. Rose Mofford, a Democrat, has assumed office. The special election was scheduled several months ago when a broad-based coalition of anti-Meachamites, led by gay activist Ed Buck, collected enough signatures to force a recall vote on Meacham.

□ Elizabeth Pincus

National S/M-Leather coalition formed

DALLAS — A Valentine's Day weekend conference attended by 125 men and women from around the country produced a steering committee to coordinate a national network of S/M-Leather organizations. The new coalition is tentatively called Safe-Sane-Consensual Adults (SSCA).

Conference participants represented over 55 organizations and businesses and determined that the new coalition should include lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual groups. "The SSCA is a logical, evolutionary step in the liberation effort for a

subculture of kinky people within our society, men and women who practice an alternate and fulfilling sexual lifestyle."

For more information, write: SSCA/Beyond Vanilla, P.O. Box 11314, San Francisco, CA 94101.

□ Jennie McKnight

Dykes bike for dough

BOSTON — The Moving Violations Motorcycle Club will hold its Third Annual Benefit Run on Sat., May 14. Women motorcyclists and their passengers are invited to take part in the 100-mile round trip to Salisbury Beach.

Riders and passengers will solicit per-mile pledges in an effort to raise funds for the Massachusetts Coalition of Battered Women's Service Group. Last year the club raised \$8000 for the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center.

To make a donation, sponsor a rider, or find out more about the ride, call Jennifer Buchwald, (617) 354-0428.

□ Jennie McKnight

Dubuque gay marchers hoping history won't repeat itself

DUBUQUE, Iowa — Lesbians and gay men here are planning their second annual lesbian and gay rights march with hopes that this year's event will be a more positive experience than their last. In September, a rather small group of Dubuque's gay activists and their supporters staged their first march and were pelted with eggs, verbally harassed and threatened by between 200 and 300 hecklers.

One of the most disturbing aspects of the fall fiasco was the failure of Dubuque police to protect the marchers. John Mauss, the chief of police, defended the cops' inaction, saying "We don't like egg throwing, but no one was hurt." The city's mayor, James Brady, went on record after the incident saying the only gay people he had ever known were child molesters.

Organizers of this year's march are seeking national support for the event, through publicity and participation. Anyone interested in attending the April 30 event should contact Stacie Neldaughter or Ginny Lynns. Write to P.O. Box 495, Dubuque, IA 52001, or call (319) 583-9018 or (319) 582-5352.

□ Jennie McKnight

Many messages in Australian Women's Day celebrations

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA — Fifteen hundred women turned out for the annual International Women's Day demonstration and parade here.

A woman who said she had marched in every Women's Day march since 1975 said



that it was still necessary to march because many issues for women had not been resolved. "Women are still being bashed and raped," she said. The woman quoted a recent federal government survey that reported one in five Australians condoned the

use of violence by a man against his wife or partner.

The 1988 march was led by Aboriginal women and their children. The theme for the event was "Colonization — Decolonization!" which was keeping with the Bicentennial Protest in 1988. Huge demonstrations have been held in Australia this year to protest celebrations of the 200 year anniversary of British colonization. Lesbian banners were prominent throughout the march, many of them supporting calls for Aboriginal land rights. At the big rally following the march, the principal speakers were Koori women.

Maureen Watson, in her call for solidarity, drew attention to one of the banners carried in the march which said "40,000 Years is Not a bicentenary!" She pointed to the ground on which most of her listeners were sitting. "Since the dawn of time," she said, "Koori women have sat where you are sitting and will continue to do so."

□ Kendall Lovett

Democratic clubs support D.C. statehood

WASHINGTON — The National Association of Gay and Lesbian Democratic Clubs has gone on record supporting statehood for the District of Columbia. D.C. residents currently have no voting representation in Congress, and laws passed by the District's city government are subject to Congressional veto.

Christine R. Riddough, executive director of NAGLDC and herself a D.C. voter, said "NAGLDC has long supported the Democratic Party policy of civil rights for all Americans. This resolution in support of D.C. statehood is one more step in that direction." She added, "If the laws of California or Illinois were subject to veto by senators from Massachusetts and Florida, the uproar would be tremendous. This situation is no different."

Perhaps the most notable example of Congress exerting its will on D.C. residents was its veto of a law passed by the D.C. City Council repealing the district's sodomy law.

□ Jennie McKnight

Israel legalizes gay sex

JERUSALEM — The Israeli Knesset recently passed a series of laws dealing with sex and crime which included the repeal of a law banning sex between consenting adults of the same gender.

The anti-gay sex law dates back to British Mandate-era Palestine, according to the *Boston Herald*, but no one had ever been prosecuted for homosexual activity. The law carried a ten year prison sentence.

□ Jennie McKnight

'Coming out' resources for prisoners

Gay and lesbian prisoners, who are inside for reasons arising mainly out of poverty and racial discrimination/frustration, are treated with much more contempt than those of us out here in 'minimum security': both inside (fewer jobs, less physical safety & more parole requirements) and outside (many halfway houses won't accept gays).

This is especially true for those gay/lesbian prisoners who are upfront about who they are. And it can happen because 'our community' is so indifferent (and thus ignorant) about the practically unaccountable power of prison bureaucracy (not to speak of the Supreme Court, etc).

Help *GCN* support these people's coming back into our midst (as basically all of them do!) by sending us up-to-date tips on job & training opportunities, low cost temporary housing, and any other info that could be useful to someone coming out with the stigma "ex-con." (Imagine for a moment trying to set yourself up in a new town with little or no \$ and just out of the joint.) Better yet, let us hear that we can refer people in your area to you for such info!

Also, books (both educational & others) are harder to get in prisons, where 'libraries'

(such as they were) are being converted to dorms when enough money can't be scraped out of legislators to build new prisons. Ask your local gay/lesbian/lefty bookstore about the chance of putting a box there for people to leave books they've already read & will donate to a prisoner (& even a jar for postage \$!) This is a small project that gets you much gratitude from prisoners (who are driven a bit 'mad' stuck in a cage with nothing to do much of the time), and it's easily done on a once-a-month basis. Write *GCN* for details if you like.

Most gay/lesbian newspapers don't even respond with a polite "Sorry..." to prisoners who ask for penpal ads or to express themselves in letters. How about writing your local rag about this. If they want to hear more about *GCN*'s experience with the Prisoner Project, just have them write us. Thanks!

□ Mike Riegle



Looking for leathermen

SAN FRANCISCO — Men who were involved in gay leathersex and associated bike clubs during the 1950s and before 1970 are asked to participate in a research project documenting the gay male leather-S/M subculture in the United States. Confidentiality of names of participants will be kept. Contact Stuart Norman, P.O. Box 11536, San Francisco, CA 94101.

□ Jennie McKnight

Women who learned they were Jewish as adults

SANTA CRUZ, Calif. — Contributions are being solicited from women who did not learn they were Jewish until they were adults for an anthology. HerBooks, a lesbian feminist press, seeks narratives, poem, journal entries, essays, letters, line drawings and black and white photographs from all women who discovered their Jewish heritage as adults.

Send contributions with SASE by June 1, 1988, to: HerBooks, P.O. Box 7467, Santa Cruz, CA 95061.

□ Jennie McKnight

Florida governor favors quarantine of PWAs

TALLAHASSEE, FL — Gov. Bob Martinez told a joint session of the Florida Legislature he supports legislation now pending in the state House and Senate which would permit quarantine of people with AIDS, according to the *Boston Globe*.

"AIDS carries [sic] who refuse to inhibit their contacts, who refuse to stop spreading this fatal disease, should no more be allowed to roam free than criminals armed with a deadly weapon. The time has come to quarantine those whose character and conduct are a clear threat to society," Martinez said.

□ Christopher Wittke

NEWSNOTES COMPILED BY JENNIE MCKNIGHT

PWA group struggles to reach people of color

Latino PWA Loren Laureano claims people of color with AIDS need their own national organization

By Chris Bull

BALTIMORE — Latino AIDS activist Loren Laureano accused the National Association of PWAs (NAPWA) of "dragging its feet" on minority concerns and called for an alternative organization for people of color with AIDS. Laureano's charges came after a March 19 meeting of NAPWA's board of directors at which an ad hoc Minority Affairs Committee (MAC) was formed.

Laureano expressed skepticism about the MAC's actual power within the organization and criticized NAPWA members who opposed its formation. "NAPWA is putting us in positions [in the organization], but without power or authority. We have no access to funds. They [take] information from us but what are we supposed to take back to our communities?" said Laureano.

Founded in 1984, NAPWA serves as an advocacy center for 24,000 PWAs and 68 PWA coalitions around the country. According to Executive Director Steven Beck, NAPWA has four primary goals: creating self-empowering programs for PWAs; promoting PWA partnerships in health care and social services; enhancing the public perception of PWAs; and contributing to safe sex education and supporting research into the treatment and cure of AIDS. NAPWA also works to support progressive AIDS legislation.

NAPWA coordinates testimony of PWAs before Congress and speaking engagements at the many AIDS conferences, forums and seminars around the country. Beck said NAPWA helps PWAs put out a consistent and strong message about the need for humane treatment of PWAs and PWARCs.

Laureano, a March on Washington organizer from Houston, said that although NAPWA's board of directors includes more people of color than almost any national organization, the extent of the AIDS epidemic in minority communities warrants more than "token" representation. Laureano stated NAPWA must commit to "do whatever it takes" to involve people of color with AIDS in PWA organizations. He suggested giving MAC the authority and resources to send people of color with AIDS around the country educating and organizing other people of color with AIDS, who all too often "get sick and are never heard from again."

Beck agreed with Laureano that NAPWA's outreach to people of color needs to be expanded. Beck stressed, however, that NAPWA has already made important strides to involve people of color in the PWA organizing process. He challenged critics to find a national organization as

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Arnie Zane

Post-modernist dancer and choreographer dies

By Michael Bronski

VALLEY COTTAGE, N.Y. — Arnie Zane, choreographer and dancer, died March 31 at his home of AIDS-related lymphoma. He was 39 years old.

Zane was best known for his artistic co-direction, along with his lover Bill T. Jones, of Bill T. Jones-Arnold Zane and Company, one of the best-known and most respected post-modernist dance troupes. Zane's earlier work as a photographer influenced his dance aesthetic. His and Jones's choreography was noted for its formal values and visual style which mixed the abstract with the anecdotal.

Zane and Jones met and began working in 1971. They formed the American Dance Asylum with Lois Welk in 1973 in Binghamton, New York. After touring the United States and Europe the two choreographer-dancers formed the Jones-Zane company in 1982. Their first piece premiered at the Next Wave dance festival at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Since that time they have won both popular and critical acclaim for their athletic, energetic and punchy dance style. One of their hallmarks was to dance to music by noted post-modernist composers who incorporated narration and



Arnie Zane (R), with Bill T. Jones

Tom Carter

texts into their art. Many critics saw them as the perfect visual interpreters of this newly-emerged musical form.

Zane was born in the Bronx and attended New York public schools and then the State University at Binghamton. When he worked on his own Zane received many fellowships for both his dancing and his choreography. In 1980 he and Jones received the German Critics Award for "Blauvelt Mountain," and in 1986 the two men were awarded the "Bessie" — the New York Dance Performance Award — for their collective work.

In addition to Jones, Zane is survived by his parents and two siblings and is remembered by many fans and dance enthusiasts.

□ filed from Boston

Kevin Patterson

Playwright Kevin Patterson dies of AIDS

By Michael Bronski

NEW YORK — Kevin Patterson, a playwright and theater press representative, died of complications from AIDS March 18 at his home in New York City. He was 32 years old.

For the past ten years Patterson gained a reputation as one of the best up-and-coming press reps in the New York theater. He represented many Broadway and off-Broadway shows, and in 1985 he joined the public relations staff of Joe Papp's New York Shakespeare Festival. Last year the Festival also lost to AIDS director Charles

Ludlam who was about to stage *Titus Andronicus*.

But it was as a playwright that Patterson wished to be known. His plays *A Safe Harbor* and *Fascination Cha-Cha* have been presented by regional theaters, and his rising reputation as a writer was firmly established with his work *A Most Secret War*, which was presented at the Harold Bloom Theater in December of 1987. Based upon *The Enigma*, Andrew Hodges's biography of gay scientist Alan Turing, *A Most Secret War* was one of two plays on Turing's life which hit the boards. Although Hugh Whitemore's *Breaking the Code* is continuing a Broadway run (basically because of the bravura performance by actor Derek Jacobi), many critics claimed that Patterson's version of the same material was better, and that his treatment of Turing's homosexuality was more sensitive.

A memorial service for Kevin Patterson will be held April 18 at 6 p.m. at the Public Theater, 425 Lafayette St., New York.

□ filed from Boston

Suit challenges FCC to define indecency

After the FCC's crackdown on the gay radio play *Jerker* and other programs last April, programmers around the country have been intimidated and have resorted to self-censorship. Litigation is pending that would require the FCC to explicitly state what is unacceptable for viewers and listeners.

By John Zeh

WASHINGTON — Broadcasters and citizens groups asked the U.S. District Court of Appeals here to force the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to spell out its landmark ruling last November banning radio and TV broadcasts of "indecent" material before midnight. Ironically, the radio station whose programming "in part" triggered the FCC's crackdown said it could not afford to take part in the appeal.

KPFK-FM in Los Angeles and its parent Pacifica Foundation — considered pioneers in community-based radio — declined to participate because, according to attorney John Crigler, they had been "exonerated" by the FCC in December "and it's simply too onerous to sustain the cost." Crigler's comments were made to the 100 people attending a forum on airwave improprieties at Catholic University.

The FCC originally issued the non-commercial, listener-supported station a warning for a late-night broadcast of *Jerker*, a play about AIDS. The piece was part of KPFK's gay program "IMRU?"

Jerker broadcasts and shows aired on two other stations, prompting the FCC last April to change its six-year policy of treating radio "just like an appliance" — requiring no attention — and keeping hands off content after 10 p.m., said attorney William Kennard. "The issue of indecency reared its ugly head and put the fear of death in broadcasters who didn't understand the ruling."

Also abandoned in April was an 11-year-old practice of using comedian George

Carlin's "Seven Dirty Words" skit as the basis for defining indecency. Another Pacifica station, WBAI in New York City, which aired Carlin's piece, was found by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1978 to have violated federal law against airing material that "describes or depicts, in terms patently

"We do have to question any area of law that is so undefined that it gives people the impression on the air that they need to wipe out of their consciousness material that ordinarily would be enriching, helpful, and inspiring."

offensive as measured by contemporary community standards for the broadcast medium, sexual, or excretory activities or organs." After Carlin, Crigler said, "Pacifica got tired of being a pioneer. We didn't know we were doomed to be a pioneer again."

After the Carlin ruling, said FCC assistant counsel Richard Bozelli, some stations "started testing and pushing the limits" so the Commission decided "the law had to be drawn before they went too far" with "verbal shock treatment."

The current filing seeks reinstatement of 10

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Run, Jane, run!

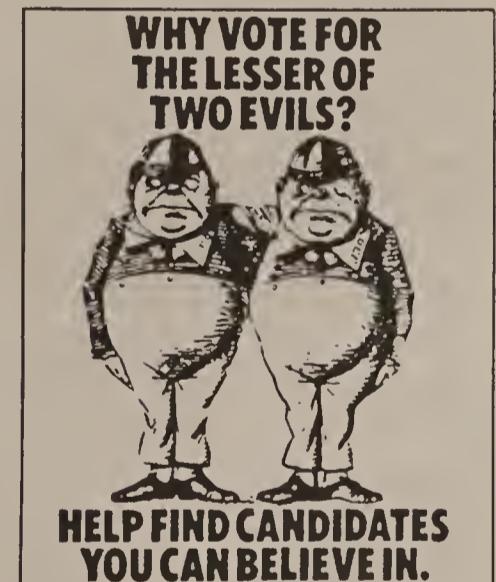
Feminization of Power tour aims to put more women on the ballot, but slick campaign-style marketing fails to attract diverse followers

By Elizabeth Pincus

BOSTON — With enough razzle-dazzle to rival the flashiest of carnivals, the Feminization of Power campaign is cutting an inspirational swath across the U.S. Thundering from town to town, organizers stage feminist pep rallies urging more women to enter the fray of electoral politics. In halls resplendent with raspberry-pink banners and swelling with rousing song, amidst all the heightened fervor of religious revival meetings, women — and an occasional man — sign the vow of the "Feminist Majority": "I pledge not to work for, nor support with my vote, money or time, any candidate who does not support and work for women's rights and feminist principles."

The Feminization of Power tour (called "Take the Power") is the brainchild of Ellie Smeal, former president of the National Organization for Women (NOW). Billed as a convention-style event, the tour combines lecture, sing-along, networking and fundraising in an appeal for the feminist infiltration of hallowed government chambers. Smeal and colleagues cite extremely lopsided statistics on gender representation in public decision making: women comprise less than five percent of the U.S. Congress and only 15.6 percent of state legislatures.

"Recent attacks on women's rights and the unraveling of sixty years of civil rights achievements has convinced feminists across the country that the current make-up of our legislatures must change," Smeal says. "In the late '60s, the '70s and '80s, a major organizing tool of the feminist movement was consciousness-raising sessions. There we learned together that the problem wasn't personal, but political. In the 1990s feminists will add another organizing tool — 'Take the Power' sessions. There we will help solve the problem by directly taking political power."



Feminization of Power motto

Smeal promotes a "National Feminist Agenda" as a component of the four-year Feminization of Power plan. The agenda, aimed at making feminist concerns central

"In the 1990s feminists will add another organizing tool — 'Take the Power' sessions. There we will help solve the problem by directly taking political power."

to the 1988 elections, includes equality issues ranging from economic justice to lesbian/gay rights to peace and disarmament. In addition to the national tour, the campaign is bolstered by a media blitz and field organizing to encourage support for feminist candidates and the feminist agenda.

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Membership Update

The next membership meeting — open to all board, staff and ongoing volunteers — is WEDNESDAY APRIL 13 from 6-9 p.m. and will primarily consist of a workshop/discussion on class issues at GCN. The class discussion takes place as part of organizing efforts to create a supplement on class politics in the lesbian and gay movement.

Again, all members are encouraged to join us April 13 (and to bring food to share). Call 426-4469 with any questions.

GCN welcomes all letters to the editor except personal attacks. Carbon copies of letters sent elsewhere are printed on a space-available basis. The opinions expressed here are those of the author and are not intended to represent the views of the GCN membership. Letters must be TYPED, DOUBLE-SPACED AND NO LONGER THAN THREE PAGES. Send to: Community Voices, GCN, 62 Berkeley St., Boston, MA 02116.

This day I weep bitterly

Dear GCN:

In Alabama they are testing all 1300 inmates in this prison and 108 have tested positive as of this day. Here HIV positives are isolated and some of us have been doing our best to educate our brothers about AIDS but it just goes on. So now 108 of my family members don't know what tomorrow will bring. Nothing to look forward to.

The winner is not who beats the disease today because we are all fighting this battle that's causing so much hurt and pain. We are fighting to help our brothers here deal with their loneliness. There are a lot of things gay men and women can do, both in and out of prison. Inmates in the AIDS ward can have a rap group here and others can find ways to help them get radios and things that mean a lot to someone kept in a cell alone all day and night. A radio can be your closest friend at night when you are dealing with your disease alone.

Prisoners have always been 'out of sight, out of mind' so it's not surprising that inmates with AIDS are ignored by 'family and friends' and some members of the gay community too.

During the March to Washington we didn't see any pictures of posters for inmates with AIDS. We can't march to Washington but we march every day to small cells to help friends here deal with AIDS.

I not only weep for my brothers in prison with AIDS, I also have a friend that I love with all my heart who has AIDS on the outside of the walls. Through his courage he gives me courage to fight and go on. If it wasn't for Richard and Boston MACT [Men of All Colors Together] there wouldn't be any AIDS information in the Alabama prisons.

We are few but we are strong. Because there is much work to be done. We must keep on educating our brothers. We are also making wooden model ships [GCN note: these are extraordinarily beautiful handmade models of sailing ships. You may want to order one from Nathaniel J to sell and buy small radios to keep the inmates with AIDS company. Without support from each other, inside and out, we are ships without sails.

Thank you Richard, MACT, and GCN!

Nathaniel Barnes
136238 H-34
100 Warrior Lane
Bessemer, AL 35023

Continued support needed at women's prison

Dear GCN:

We'd like to thank everyone out there for your concern in response to our letter. We have ended the hunger strike knowing that we need to get support in other ways. We are alone and desperate in this area and not quite sure what to do next. Our warden shows no concern and the things we have wanted most have been denied. We women are not permitted phone calls and visits are almost impossible. There's never privacy and even lawyers have been refused entry.

Mr. Morris the new warden never speaks to us or answers our letters. Instead he

pushes us off to someone else who is against what we ask. A hopeless situation. When we appeal their assaults, harassments and tampering with our mail, they treat us like animals. We fight and we lose. We are not trying in the dark to get our radios back.

Our concern is to take the warden to court to get our rights equal to those of other inmates (men), but we have no legal assistance.

Now we need support to get back what we lost when Mr. Morris took the job last year and shows no concern or little human emotion for our suffering.

Delana Emery
17088
1479 Collins Ave
Marysville, OH 43040

Integrate Black lesbian and gay writers

GCN received a copy of this letter to the director of the National Black Writers Conference:

Dear Dr. Nunez-Harrell:

Please accept our greetings and commendations to the conveners and participants of THE SECOND NATIONAL BLACK WRITERS CONFERENCE. This is indeed a very noteworthy and newsworthy occasion deserving the attention of all Americans who are involved in the arts and humanities.

Unfortunately, the conference caught our attention because of the minimal participation of Lesbian and Gay writers of color scheduled as panelists. Clearly, discussions of the images of Black men, women, children, and families in the context of prototypes and stereotypes, and new trends and emerging images would benefit greatly by the insights and experiences of members of a growing wave of Black Lesbian and Gay writers. These writers are doing more than carrying on the traditions established by historical Black literary figures such as Angelina Weld Grimké, Richard Bruce Nugent, Alice Dunbar Nelson, and Alain Locke, but unlike their predecessors break new ground for refusing to hide their sexual identities, and by addressing the social, political, and psychological oppression of Blacks, Lesbians, and Gays in their writing. These men and women write with conscience and integrity, and without fear of how a potential readership of literary peers will respond.

The organizers of this conference have responded by: a) not broadening their sociological definition of "family" to be inclusive of alternative family structures by allowing for more varied panel perspectives through the inclusion of Lesbian and Gay writers; b) not making a conscious outreach effort to solicit conference registration from a wider range of both established and fledgling Black Lesbian and Gay writers; and c) including writers such as Barbara Smith and Becky Bertha too late for their names to be included in conference promotional materials. Such oversights are unacceptable, inexcusable, and indicative of the oppressive behaviors of which alienated segments of our society are capable.

It is our desire and request that this letter be read at the Closing Session of THE SECOND NATIONAL BLACK WRITERS CONFERENCE in an effort to enlighten participants about the growing need for acceptance of progressive viewpoints. It is also our desire that a resolution be introduced and passed to fully integrate Black Lesbian and Gay writers, educators, and publishers into all aspects — including program planning, panel participation, and registration solicitation — of upcoming conferences.

We thank you for your time and attention, and offer our assistance with your future endeavors.

Sincerely,
Craig G. Harris
Washington, DC

AIDS and syphilis

Dear GCN:

In December, contributors to the *New England Journal of Medicine* suggested that syphilis can proceed to neurosyphilis as quickly as two months after infection. This poses a real dilemma in testing and treatment.

If you are exposed to syphilis and diagnosed soon enough, the standard protocol, 2.4 million units of benzathine penicillin, may take care of it (although many syphilologists now question that).

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Gay Community News is published weekly (except the last week of April, August and December), by the Bromfield Street Educational Foundation, Inc., a non-profit corporation. Our office is located at 62 Berkeley Street, Boston, MA 02116. (617) 426-4469. TTY/TDD 426-0332.

Second-class postage paid at Boston, Mass. Annual subscription rate is \$33. Institutional rate: \$40. ISSN: J0147-0728. Member New England Press Association, Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, COSMEP member.

GCN is included in the Alternative Press Index, published quarterly by the Alternative Press Center, Inc., Box 33109, Baltimore, MD 21218.

Volumes 1-14 of **GCN** are available on microfilm for \$33/volume. Write **GCN**/Microfilm for more information.

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If the diagnosis is delayed — if you are infected anally or vaginally, or there is simply no chancre sore — the syphilis may get beyond the blood brain barrier into the cerebrospinal fluid or the eye. Routine testing for syphilis may expose the blood infection, but not the neurological one. You may then be treated with benzathine penicillin and told you are cured.

But the horror of this protocol is that benzathine penicillin does not cross the blood-brain barrier and is therefore ineffective in the treatment of neurosyphilis. How many people dying of AIDS dementia are really dying of neurosyphilis is a question that is coming up more and more.

The CDC said in 1982 that two-thirds of gay men had had syphilis. If you have not been regularly and properly tested for syphilis throughout your sex life, you could be harboring neurosyphilis and not be aware of it.

To complicate matters, HIV-positive persons may test falsely on the standard syphilis blood tests because they may not be able to mount the "normal" immunological response required of such tests. One can try hunting syphilitic treponemes directly by having skin irregularities (rashes, swollen lymphs, etc.) biopsied and subjected to a silver-staining test. But some researchers suggest we may be dealing with a blood-to-blood infection and not a direct treponemal one, and treponemes may not be found (syphilitic plasma without treponemes has been demonstrated in the test tube.)

January's *Atlantic* magazine brought the AIDS/syphilis connection into the mainstream consciousness and discussed in particular the testing dilemma. Some of us patients have banded together not to champion the theory but to explore it. We know, for example, there are three new tests for syphilis being developed. If you would like to know more, write us.

Mike Smith
Patient Advocate Network
279 Collingwood
San Francisco, CA

Homophobic merry-go-round

Dear GCN:

I'm a transvestite and due to my effeminate appearance, I've been in Administrative Segregation 90 percent of the time that I've been in federal custody and have been transferred to 5 different institutions. As soon as I arrive they put me in the hole. I get no type of due process. I have no disciplinary write-ups. My life is not in jeopardy. I've never testified against anyone, no enemies, etc.

There's no legal reason why I should be kept being placed in the hole and shuffled all around the country. I've even been forced 3 times to get the AIDS test (which have all come back negative). The Bureau of Prisons has gone against their own policies and a slew of other constitutional rights.

What happens when I arrive somewhere is they isolate me and notify the Regional office they want me transferred. The Regional takes a couple months to redesignate me, and when I get to the new place the same thing happens again. It's called (unofficially) the 'merry-go-round'. This is how they've chosen to deal with me because of my appearance and their homophobia.

From speaking with other prisoners who've experienced the same treatment, it's not an easy situation to get out of. The only course to take is to get a restraining order so I can't be taken out of the institution and then try to get an attorney to file a suit attacking this harassment, discrimination and constitutional rights violation. Once they're exposed, I'll be left alone.

I don't have the funds (or family) to do any of this. I'm afraid to imagine what my mental health will be like by 1991 when my time is up if this keeps up. If there's any assistance out there, it'd be gratefully appreciated.

John F. Harding
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Box 1000
Milan, MI 48160

We only went out five times

By Rex Wockner

Your funeral, Jeff is in progress. I told the office I wouldn't be in today, set the alarm for 7:30, called that little town to find out where the Catholic church was, got out my suit to see if the pants would button (they wouldn't), and then made some decaf and sat down at the typewriter. We only went out four or five times, and yet all this weekend I was feeling I should go to your funeral today. I guess I wondered if any gay people would be there.

You lived in a farmhouse in a town so small it's not on my state map. You never went to bars or gay community events, opting instead for infrequent trips to video arcades. In the blue collar, melodically accented, downstate-Illinois farmer world in which you lived, it might turn out that your only funeral mourners are your mom and dad's childhood friends.

I wanted to go, looking as handsome and well-groomed as possible, just so the ones who did know you were gay would think maybe there had been someone in your gay life who brought you happiness. I wanted to go and stay seated during the parts of the mass when everyone stands and kneels, so they could maybe suspect that you would never have chosen a Catholic mass as your exit ceremony for this world. I wonder if the priest will even mention AIDS in his homily.

I wanted to pay my tributes to you today too, Jeff. The Sunday newspaper, which didn't mention AIDS, said you were 35. I never would have guessed it. You looked 25, with your uncombed wavy brown hair and your scraggly beard that tried to cover your whole face. You were the epitome of rural-

Fairness doesn't seem to really have a home in an accidentally evolved universe which recently evolved a queer new virus.

Midwestern masculinity. It wasn't a uniform. You really wore shit-kicker boots, boot-cut Levi's, a thick leather belt and a faded flannel shirt. Your jeans always bagged in the butt, like those of straight men.

I can remember going to dinner with you once at Pizzeria Uno. Even if I wear shit-kicker boots, faded Levi's and a flannel shirt, something about me betrays too many years around universities. In the same clothes, you exuded farmboy simplicity and innocence. Lots of people looked at us, sensing that we were mismatched. You seemed uncomfortable that night too. Perhaps it wasn't your habit to go on dates with men at fancy pizza restaurants. Maybe you weren't out of the closet enough or maybe it just wasn't how your libido wanted to spend time with me. We went back to my house and watched a special anniversary edition of Carson and had very safe sex.

After that I ran into you in town a few times, including once just two months ago. You looked fine, although you told me you'd just had a tough battle with Hepatitis B. Did you know there was a vaccine? We still really caught each other's eye, but the people at the pizza joint were right, we didn't have much to talk about. So, we said we'd see each other around sometime.

As I sit here scribbling, I guess your funeral is winding to a close. Perhaps everyone is standing in line for communion now. I'm sorry I'm not there. I did stay home from work and think about you. It's kind of unthinkable, though, to be 30 and have my friends dying. I wish there were something profound I could cull from it, but all I can feel is that it's not fair.

Fairness doesn't seem to really have a home, however, in an accidentally evolved universe which recently evolved a queer new virus. So I'll just curse the injustice and hope some ruddy men did show up at that mass. I'll miss you.

Rex Wockner is a reader from Chicago.

Animal research & AIDS: Ethics and effectiveness

By Sally Miller Gearhart

Many of us, I daresay most particularly women, have over the centuries increasingly mistrusted the foundations of western medical practice. We have wondered about its obsessive drive to rid humankind of death and "imperfection" at any cost. We have questioned its human chauvinism, its invasive techniques, its disregard for process, and its often arrogant disrespect for the intelligence and dignity of the individual patient.

Because we are now making large and justified demands upon medical and pharmaceutical institutions and because we are a gentle, but angry people, lesbians, gay men and feminists can have a tremendous influence in the changing of current scientific practices, particularly those that encourage useless, redundant and inhumane animal protocols. Even as we fight for our own lives and the lives of those we love, we can teach medicine and industry that the methods by which they accomplish their goals have values in themselves, that there is an ethic to the "how" of science as well as to its "what."

The California AIDS initiative (*The AIDS Research Act of 1988*) raises a serious question of conscience for many of us who fight for both lesbian/gay causes and the liberation of animals. My first reaction was delight that we had finally formulated an initiative that would allow Californians to vote FOR an AIDS bill; my second reaction was dismay that the initiative was for AIDS research instead of for AIDS education and the care of people with AIDS.

The problem I have is that our bill could increase the imprisonment, suffering and death of nonhuman animals. AIDS research is of two kinds: 1) that which seeks a CURE for or an arrest of the disease in people with AIDS or in those who are antibody positive, and 2) that which seeks PREVENTION, specifically research to discover a vaccine or other barriers to the disease. Even most researchers will admit that animals are not necessary in the first area when so many human volunteers are eager to participate in clinical trials for newly-developed drugs and therapies.

It is the second area that many would argue requires animal experimentation, for before a vaccine is tested on human subjects it is ordinarily tested on animal models. The likelihood is not great that healthy human volunteers will elect to take the vaccine before it has been "proved" to work on chimpanzees or other animals (though some people have suggested that the researchers who are convinced that HIV is harmless and not the cause of AIDS could themselves volunteer to be subjects for the testing of HIV vaccines).

I want research, yes, but not at the expense of animals. I want researchers — and lesbians, gay men, and feminists — to abandon their efforts to find an animal model for vaccine testing and shift the money presently underwriting that highly questionable research into an area that we know is effective, i.e., into prevention through education.

I take this position because it is becoming clear that AIDS is not a part of non-human life experience. First, *empirically speaking*: seven years of frantic testing, millions of dollars, and thousands of animal lives have failed to give any animal the disease, not even the chimpanzee, the most promising non-human subject. Second, *scientifically speaking*: HIV infects humans via the T-cells; the fact that the non-human T-cell structure (even that of other primates) is so very different from that of humans casts serious doubt on the suitability of non-human animals as models for HIV infection. Finally, *behaviorally speaking*: non-human animals do not ordinarily participate in the activities that most frequently transmit the virus, i.e., they do not exchange it through anal intercourse, intravenous drug use, or the receiving of blood products.

In other words, we have to face the possibility that AIDS is a UNIQUELY human disease and that if we want a vaccine we must test that vaccine only on human subjects who have given their informed consent.

If I understand correctly the initiative's history, we at first attempted to get the State Legislature to place it before the voters on

the November 1988 ballot. That body resisted doing so because legislators felt that the Governor would certainly veto the action. Thus we are left with the task of getting the signatures ourselves for its inclusion on the ballot.

Originally the measure had proposed the use of laboratory animals in three specific parts of its detail. When the statewide committee set to work to ready the initiative for the signature-gathering campaign, some animal rights activists from the lesbian and gay community challenged those recommendations. The committee responded immediately; it deleted those three references and sent the entire initiative back

We have to face the possibility that AIDS is a uniquely human disease and that if we want a vaccine we must test that vaccine only on human subjects who have given their informed consent.

yet again through all the red tape of the Office of the Secretary of State for a final approval. Thus what is before us is a proposition that has within it NO REFERENCE WHATSOEVER TO ANIMAL USE, and even more important, a position from which any such reference has been deliberately and laboriously deleted.

The fact that so much effort went into this changing of the language testifies that we do not by this initiative intend any AIDS research to use animals. Those efforts allow us as voters to expect that the Board administering the funding will steadfastly refuse to fund any such research.

Our task when the initiative passes will be to remind the board and the legislature of the clear intent of the proposition. Between now and November our task is to educate ourselves, medical science, and the pharmaceutical industry about our needs as a community stricken with AIDS and about our desire not to exploit other species in helping ourselves.

As a strong political entity in this state and in the nation, our lesbian and gay community is in an almost unique position. The epidemic has touched our lives more deeply than it has touched any other organized group and as a result we have been and will continue to be forced to deal with medical institutions on a large scale. We have discovered over these years some of the miracles of medical science and some truly sensitive, caring, and intelligent practitioners of it. We also now know how self-aggrandizing and with what questionable ethics medical science can operate. We have seen that the pharmaceutical industry can be competitive, profiteering, and exploitative to the disadvantages of those they purport to help.

So I call on all of us to join forces with animal rights activists and to make the next decade more than just a battleground for our rights, our dignity, and our health. It can be as well a time for our education of the medical establishment and a time for our expression of concern for all of life, whatever its form.

Sally Miller Gearhart is a lesbian and feminist activist and writer from San Francisco.

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International conference ponders homosexuality

"Essentialist" and "Constructivist" theorists duke it out cordially at winter gathering in Amsterdam

By Christopher Reed

AMSTERDAM — About 500 gay men and lesbians from around the world convened here from Dec. 15-18 for an international conference on homosexuality. They came to a city where the lighthearted friendliness of its inhabitants combines with a powerful commitment to political decency. Other contrasts can also be noted here — in the juxtaposition of the Anne Frank House and the Homomonument in the shadow of the picturesque Westerkerk. These contrasts were echoed in the title of the conference, "Homosexuality, Which Homosexuality?" which provided a forum for a debate which has consequences for the academic study of homosexuality and potentially profound political ramifications.

The debate that the HWH conference (as it quickly became abbreviated) addressed grew out of conflicts between "essentialist" and "constructivist" scholars at the last two such international gatherings, held in 1985 in Toronto and 1983 in Amsterdam. In brief, the essentialist view, arising out of 19th century medical discourse, assumes that homosexuality is an innate, historically continuous, biological phenomenon. The constructivist approach arises primarily out of 20th century anthropological research into incidence of and attitudes toward same-sex sexuality in so-called non-Western cultures. This analysis suggests that the concept of homosexuality — indeed the whole notion of sexual orientation — is specific to our time and place and cannot be assumed to be mappable onto other cultures.

Carol Vance, a sex radical and an anthropologist from Columbia University in New York, opened the conference with a clear and insightful analysis of both sides of the issue. She attempted to create a framework for the conference by preempting what she saw as a fruitless lines of debate based on misunderstandings of each position.

Resistance to constructivism, both in and outside academe, stems primarily from anxieties over its political implications. Might it not be used to deny gay men and lesbians a history? Or to buttress arguments that homosexuality is learned — by seduction even — and might be overcome? As Esther Newton has been quoted as responding to "deconstructionists" interested in notions

in which we have found our sense of ourselves as members of a distinct minority group and from which we have devised political strategies to gain rights and recognition.

Following Vance's opening remarks, the conference participants dispersed for a series of about 100 workshops in a variety of fields. The constructivism/essentialism debate was pursued most closely in the history and social science panels, while many other current issues, literature, and art workshops focused on other topics of interest, with speakers presenting the fruits of their work.

Despite some claims to the contrary, one reason the Dutch intellectuals are so interested in this debate is that gay men and lesbians here — at least in Amsterdam — have achieved enough political success to allow for a measure of philosophical reflection of their condition. Homosexuality here is integrated into the currents of mainstream society to an extent that can only amaze and exhilarate more embattled foreigners. Conference organizers found themselves in the position of constantly asserting that Holland was not "Heaven on earth."

The conference was organized by a group at the Free University and the Schorer Foundation, a counseling and therapy provider for lesbians and gay men. A healthy proportion of the panels, therefore, were geared for those who work directly with individuals troubled by their experience of the current social construction of homosexuality in relation to their bodies and lives. This focus brought to the conference an atmosphere of urgency and relevance not always evident when academics gather to talk shop. It also forced discussion to turn from the study of large social groupings common in constructivist inquiry to the level of the individual, where arguments about genetics and biology carry more weight.

Dr. Jan Schippers of the Schorer Foundation gave several presentations, in one of them addressing the therapeutic potential of constructivism. The analysis can empower individuals to free themselves from both the heterosexist norms and cliches of gay and lesbian "lifestyle," which some experience as oppressive. In such cases, seeing social structures as constructed rather than given

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of homosexuality: "Deconstruct heterosexuality first!"

Vance stressed that in the constructivist view homosexuality as a concept is no more constructed than heterosexuality — in fact, each term relies on the other to make any sense. She insisted that constructivism does not imply that individuals can easily alter their sense of sexual identity. She made the analogy that national identity, which few believe to be biologically fixed, is generally experienced as innate and relatively constant.

Most importantly, Vance stressed that constructivism is not an answer, but a way of asking questions. It is not the conclusion that contemporary same-sex sexuality has nothing in common with geographically or temporally disparate counterparts; constructivism is rather the proposition that we ought to find out what the areas of commonality and differences are — not just assume that everyone is like us.

Vance was equally eloquent in noting constructivism's potential to be politically and personally debilitating, as it calls into question the basis of homosexual identity — one

and fixed for all time can help people take more control over their lives. Schippers ended, however, by arguing for a combined approach, seeing essentialist strategies, such as locating homosexuals in history and emerging into a distinct gay community as crucial as long as society is constructed in terms that oppose hetero- to homosexuality.

This attempt to combine constructivism and essentialism, without sacrificing the hard-won gains of gay identity, ran throughout the conference, at least in response to contemporary political and social issues. It would have been instructive to have this perspective come into more direct contact with the more hardline constructivism of some anthropologists and historians. But the enormous breadth of the conference events, which necessitated a schedule packed with simultaneous panels, unfortunately precluded much interaction across professional fields — and, more importantly, across gender lines.

No doubt the smooth organization of the conference by its Dutch coordinators, including such thoughtful touches as free bus

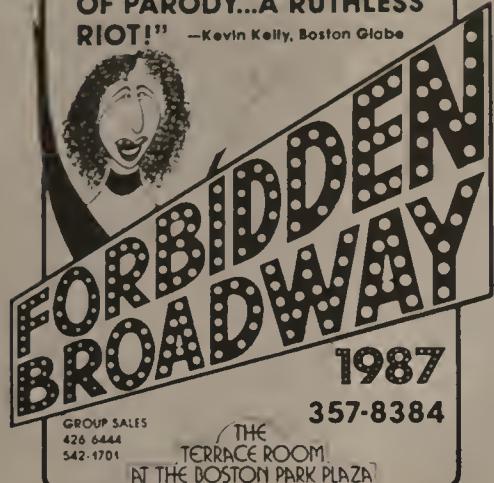
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(BOSTON'S BEST MUSICAL)

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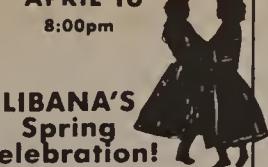
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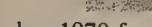
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her 1979 feature debut *My Brilliant Career*, lends sympathy to the role of Lilli, who has eschewed commitment for the life of a drifter. The lead was originally written for a male protagonist, but Armstrong and her collaborators substituted Lilli, hoping to challenge the stereotype of boy beats on the loose. The effort succeeds; Lilli is believable, melancholy, engagingly enigmatic. Unfortunately, the movie as a whole is a shimmering failure, all awash with sea-greens and blues, soulful stares and an unabidingly melodramatic soundtrack.

Too bad. Armstrong's films have always pleased, even if slightly quaint (*Career*) or scatterbrained (*Starstruck*). The best of the lot, *Mrs. Soffel*, met with box office death to match the film's dank gloom. *High Tide* may fare better, with the comely Judy Davis as Lilli, well-rendered supporting characters and a tidy, upbeat resolution. I just wish the film had avoided histrionics and nixed its ultimate message of redemption.

What we get is a barely cloaked '80s morality tale. Billed as an "unconventional love story," *High Tide* actually grapples with traditional issues: relationships between mothers and daughters, the definitions of commitment, work options for women and the allure of the road. The juiciest dilemma arises between Lilli and her

stepmother Bet over custody of Ally, Lilli's daughter and Bet's granddaughter.

For Lilli, long-suffering since her husband's death, the chance reunion with Ally evokes memories of her husband and fantastical hopes for love regained. Bet, played with rambunctious warmth by former vaudevillian Jan Adele, struggles with the fear of losing Ally, her only constant companion. The choices the characters make are not remarkable — certainly not "unconventional." In fact, *High Tide* reinforces the standard viewpoint that waywardness can be redeemed by buckling down to responsibilities. For all its benign acceptance of Lilli, the movie loves her best when she invites Ally back into her life.

The good stuff in *High Tide* is the visual loveliness, maybe too lovely for the supposedly depressed seaport of Eden, the film's southern Australia locale. *High Tide* is laden with luscious pastels, watery vistas and quirky, weather-beaten clam joints. The characters reside in the Mermaid Caravan Park, way less-than-luxury digs but filmed as somehow too resort-like with melty colors and whimsical trim. For a working class setting, everything is too precious, from Lilli's baby blue vintage auto to Bet's sunwashed ice cream truck. Aside from her emotional entanglements, it's hard to know why Lilli feels so anxious about leaving this rustic town. Or why pre-teen Ally, surfboard in tow, craves to bust out from a seemingly idyllic setting.

Ally does, however, successfully evoke a yearning, indecipherable sadness. Played with understated intelligence by Claudia Karvan, Ally is both lanky tomboy and sylph-like mermaid, nearly always ensconced in a wetsuit. Grandmother Bet is her foil, boisterous and sexy, who struggles to offer Ally an anchor in the absence of the parents she never knew. And Lilli, faint smirk about the mouth notwithstanding, captivates the screen with a smoldering ambiguity.

So despite *High Tide*'s heavy-handedness, something satisfying comes in watching a commercial film focused entirely on independent women. Like the subtle, far superior *Housekeeping*, *High Tide* depicts women of different generations striving to engage with each other while testing their own, uncalculated drives. If only the film did not suffer from excess earnestness, drenched in pale colors and sweet, sweet dreams. □

Amsterdam

Continued from page 6

service between the suburban university and central Amsterdam, contributed to the overall harmonious atmosphere at the conference. There were a few cases of contentious public competition from individual participants who were apparently accustomed to being bigger fish in smaller ponds, but on the whole participants were able to remember that despite the impressive show of confident and articulate gay men and lesbians at the conference, we get enough grief from the world around us and ought to be nice to one another.

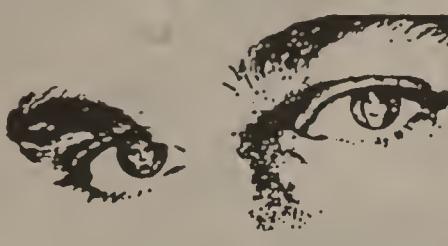
Even the combination of rarified academic focus with the practical concerns of those in the counseling professions,

however, still left unrepresented the more directly politically activist contingent of gay intellectual life. This absence was especially acute for the English participants, who in the hours before the conference opened learned of a Parliamentary vote on the sweeping and homophobic Clause 29. (See *GCN*, Vol. 15, No. 32.)

The challenge for a constructivist generation of intellectuals is to present all of sexuality as constructed, provisional, and susceptible to change. That's a tall order, especially in relation to people whose heterosexual identity has always seemed self-evidently the norm. It's more than a political strategy to demand, "Deconstruct heterosexuality first." It is an insistence on the intellectual honesty and methodological rigor of constructivism, which must tackle the toughest problems it raises. □

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Judy Davis as Lilli in *High Tide*

Taming upstart women

High Tide's visual loveliness and conventional solutions

High Tide. Directed by Gillian Armstrong. With Judy Davis. At the USA-Nickelodeon, Boston.

By Elizabeth Pincus

High Tide opens with a gaudy Elvis impersonator belting a tune to the accompaniment of three swaying backup singers. These women vocalists are bound in chartreuse mermaid suits and capped with blunt, white-blond wigs queasily reminiscent of Kathleen Turner's mop in *Crimes of Passion*. One of the singers, Lilli, wields a canny smile that betrays her come-hither performance. Lilli knows it is a facile, dead-end gig and, sure enough, her cocky attitude towards Elvis gets her fired at the film's outset. On the road again. But first, *High Tide* presents the story of Lilli's emotional tribulations following her accidental encounter with Ally, the daughter she left behind over ten years ago.

With *High Tide*, Australian director Gillian Armstrong delivers a welcome addition to the genre of films about lone wanderers. Armstrong, renowned for directing upstart women since her 1979 feature debut *My Brilliant Career*, lends sympathy to the role of Lilli, who has eschewed commitment for the life of a drifter. The lead was originally written for a male protagonist, but Armstrong and her collaborators substituted Lilli, hoping to challenge the stereotype of boy beats on the loose. The effort succeeds; Lilli is believable, melancholy, engagingly enigmatic. Unfortunately, the movie as a whole is a shimmering failure, all awash with sea-greens and blues, soulful stares and an unabidingly melodramatic soundtrack.

Too bad. Armstrong's films have always pleased, even if slightly quaint (*Career*) or scatterbrained (*Starstruck*). The best of the lot, *Mrs. Soffel*, met with box office death to match the film's dank gloom. *High Tide* may fare better, with the comely Judy Davis as Lilli, well-rendered supporting characters and a tidy, upbeat resolution. I just wish the film had avoided histrionics and nixed its ultimate message of redemption.

What we get is a barely cloaked '80s morality tale. Billed as an "unconventional love story," *High Tide* actually grapples with traditional issues: relationships between mothers and daughters, the definitions of commitment, work options for women and the allure of the road. The juiciest dilemma arises between Lilli and her

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Spare Tyre Theatre Co. in **Laugh Lines**

Women in Theatre Festival 1988

Somewhere Over the Balcony. Charabanc Theatre Company of Belfast, Northern Ireland. Boston College. March 18, 19.

Hotel Destiny. Siren Theatre Company of London. Suffolk Univ. March 19.

One Fool. Lilith Theatre with Terry Baum. Suffolk Univ. March 19.

Laugh Lines. Spare Tyre of London. Suffolk Univ. March 24.

Dos Lesbos. By Terry Baum and Carolyn Myers. Suffolk Univ. March 25.

The Legend of Lily Overstreet. By Rhodessa Jones. Suffolk Univ. March 26.

Muffet inna all a wi. Sistren Theatre Collective of Kingston, Jamaica. Northeastern Univ. March 25, 26.

By Monica Hileman

Under the watchful eyes of British soldiers, three women in Belfast's Divis Flats housing project go about their daily business. Their homes are comparable to units in a run-down Boston project, except that instead of drug wars, the residents engage in regular skirmishes with a fully equipped occupation army. Ceely (Marie Jones) takes pride in her bingo broadcasts. Kate (Carol Scanlon) worries that a wall in her apartment is crumbling down and Rosemarie (Eleanor Methven) tries to keep watch over her car; it doesn't run but she still keeps it polished and worries that some hoods might wreck it. "Hoods!" says Ceely, "Those are my kids you're talking about!"

From their 17th-story balconies, the three watch the unfolding drama below as a wedding turns into a military stand-off. The women wisecrack about the "Brits" and the welfare snoop who comes around in disguise. They sing about Rambo, a dog that lost an eye to a rubber bullet, about marriage ("Maybe it was better to stay on the shelf"), and do a hear-no-evil song with the chorus, "We don't see what was never seen, or hear what was never heard...."

To see the Charabanc production of "Somewhere Over the Balcony," the opening piece in this year's Women in Theatre Festival, was to see lives seldom portrayed on stage. Through extensive interviews with the women who actually live in the Divis Flats project, Charabanc attempted to be true to their experience. And at the end of the Saturday night performance, the troupe came back onstage to briefly tell the audience about the strength of the Divis Flats women. The Charabanc company also described their joy when they were finally able to perform the work for the women who inspired it.

The three actresses give sure-footed performances, communicating an emotional connection to the characters. Charabanc is tincter with a message, making you see and feel without telling you what to think. The respect the company has for the Divis Flats women is extended to the audience, an au-

dience that is meant to include those women.

"Somewhere" not only captures irrepressible spirit and biting humor, it is also a fine piece of theater. Regrettably, some of the dialogue was inaccessible to us Yanks in the audience — particularly during the first half. Not because of weak delivery, but because of the thick brogue. It's a tribute to the women's stage presence and pacing that the inability to understand them at all times detracted little from the performance. In one of the musical numbers, the three characters sing that they just want "to win once" Charabanc's "Somewhere Over the Balcony" is a clear winner.

A week later, the festival offered "Dos Lesbos," written by Terry Baum and Carolyn Myers. At the start of the piece, Peg mentions the word "typing" as she greets her lover Gracie who is just returning home from work. Gracie lets loose with a SCREAM, and says, "Please don't speak to me about typing." The scream is drawn out and overdone, like everything in this production. Personally, I'm not crazy about the "more is more" approach to comedy and I don't think it served this play well. I can't speak for the playwright's intentions, but having read the script in *Places Please! The First Anthology of Lesbian Plays*, I had my own preconceived notions. I found myself cringing during the Friday night performance as I watched Kelley Edwards as Gracie and stand-up comic Lea DeLaria as Peg. My feeling is — if comedians want to do their own schtick, they ought to do it with their own material.

The broad slapstick was over-exaggerated in DeLaria's portrayal of Peg as a beer-swilling butch who happens to have a taste for escargot. Give me a break. If you liked Jackie Gleason's Ralph (*Honeymooners*) Cramden, you would have enjoyed DeLaria's simmering smiles and exasperated fits. Although Peg never threatened her lover with "Someday... Pow! Right in the kiss!" her use of aggressive body language throughout the play seemed way out of line. Gracie is portrayed as an overly neurotic nudge who recites her own poetry, loves complicated situations and is in the process of coming out to her liberal, middle class, Jewish parents.

Another problem with the overblown comedy is that transitions don't get made between the funny parts and the touching parts — like when Gracie recites a sensual love poem to Peg towards the end.

To my mind, "Dos Lesbos" should have had the pacing of a screwball comedy. But watching this performance was like listening to a 45 disc at 33RPM. This is not to say, however, that "Dos Lesbos" was a flop. On the contrary, judging from the laughter and the applause, the audience heartily enjoyed every minute.

One of the last performances in the festival featured Rhodessa Jones as Lily Overstreet. Having worked in peep shows ("a cross between a nude encounter and go go dancing"), Lily wants to know why men get turned on by that stuff. Striking some cheesecake poses for the audience, she asks, "What do you think? Is this hot?"

The play begins in the Church of Creative Survival with a musical introduction by Idris Ackamoore. No mere back-up musician, Ackamoore not only blows a mean sax, he is an all around performer and the show's composer. When Jones, as Lily O., sweeps on stage in a gorgeous glittering red robe, she lead us in a feminist prayer, a take off on the Catholic "Our Father" (Deliver us not into Home Economics...). She also sings a rousing hymn, strutting back and forth like a revivalist preacher and telling the flock, "A woman does not demands her independence, she creates it." "Praise the Mother Power!"

The play is full of great lines. Remembering back to the early feminist movement of the '60s, she says, "It wasn't cool to be dependent on a man, but weren't nobody telling us how to get by without one." After accepting a job as a peek-a-boo dancer, she had a "morality attack" and called her grandmother. When she hears how much the job pays, grandma says, "Well, there's always been show people in our family."

With her quick shifts in mood, Jones had the audience roaring with laughter one moment and sitting in awkward silence the next. "The Legend of Lily Overstreet" is not a neat package and often cuts close to the bone — perhaps because it is based on Jones' own experience. Jones went to work in San Francisco's Tenderloin District in 1979 after her CETA job was defunded.

The personal nature of the piece coupled with some apprehension about performing in Boston (the prudish/conservative image persists) may have been the cause for a certain tentativeness on Jones' part in the first half. The audience was initially equally tentative — I think part of the problem stemmed from an uncertainty about how to respond to a sensuous Black woman celebrating her sexuality while simultaneously recounting the pain and sleaziness of working in the sex industry.

When Lily first goes looking for work, one place tells her: we can't hire you because then colored men would start coming around and we don't want this to turn into that kind of place, if you know what I mean. Never at a loss for words, Lily replies, "Mother fucker, what do you mean?" Her caustically funny rejoinders are beauts. One customer asks her if the hair on her head is really hers. "Yeah, I bought it," she says, touching the wig, "It's mine."

In the second part of the show, Lily leaves the peep business to become famous as an erotic recording artist and game show personality. The tone is lighter and more celebratory. Answering her mail on the air, she gives advice: "Sit on it, honey... Share it with somebody — but negotiate." And when three charming volunteers from the audience joined her on stage Saturday night for a segment of "Feed Your Fantasy," things got unexpectedly hot.

"The Legend of Lily Overstreet" is a theatrical sensation. Jones is wonderful. And the costumes are fabulous. By the end of the second half Jones was saying that Boston was nothing like she imagined: "I love it here." The feeling was mutual — we loved having her here.

Overall, I'd say this year's festival was the



Kelley Edwards and Lea DeLaria in **Dos Lesbos**

best so far. I liked the fact that productions were presented in conjunction with local arts groups and that a wider audience participated. The Women and Theatre Festival '88 organizers should be congratulated for putting together a collection of quality work that reflects the diverse experience of women. □



By Mara Math

If this year's Women in Theatre Festival had a theme beyond an eclectic internationalism (international eclecticism?), that theme must have been humor. Handled with a relatively light touch were topics including "the troubles" in Ireland, aging, lesbian identity, lesbian relationships, self-deception, class and racism.

Ireland's Charabanc opened the festival Friday night, March 18, with "Somewhere Over the Balcony," a life-affirming we-have-to-laugh-or-we'd-cry vision of contemporary Ireland. Although lacking dramatic conflict between the characters and a feminist outlook (exemplified in the cliche of one woman character's henpecked husband), the show makes for an enjoyable evening. (See other review of Charabanc, this page.)

The next evening, Siren and Terry Baum offered humor that hit even closer to home, sometimes close to the bone. The British troupe Siren says in their "Company Policy" statement that "The Company aims to continually stretch and subvert the confines of style and form, reflecting the unease of the modern psyche." And in "Hotel Destiny: A Lesbian Western," yee-hah, they do a damn good job.

Arriving for a country-western show, four performers find themselves isolated in a hotel that rapidly becomes metaphysical, offering them No Exit. Trapped together are an evangelist with a lavender-tinged past, the Bible-toting Chance Earp (Tasha Fairbanks, who wrote the script); fading Western movie star Miss Evans (Hilary Ramsden), a butch-with-a-heart-of-femme; super-sexy country singer Rough Crockett (Jude Winter), another dimming luminary; and the cute and cocky Blame the Kid Cassidy (Jane Boston), would-be inheritor of Rough's mantle and possessor of a smirk that just won't quit.

As the four vie for top billing on the forthcoming show, they drop — or have stripped from them — their social masks, and in the process offer some telling insights into personal and social identity and the chasm they may lie between. The acting is ex-



Bev Hanson as Anansi in **Muffet**

celent, and the show also deserves mention for exceptionally good blocking.

Terry Baum's "One Fool; or How I Stopped Worrying and Learned to Love the Dutch" is a largely autobiographical one-person comedy. As a Fool for Love (the piece is not *entirely* autobiographical), Baum explores the self-delusion that often accompanies bouts of True Love. "I'm moving 6,000 miles for love," she cries, after falling in love with a Dutch woman, "my friends will be so jealous!" Her lovemaking with the coat rack that represents this lover is one of the funniest scenes I have ever seen on stage. The flamenco masturbation ballad ain't bad either.

Alack and alas, two months after arriving in Amsterdam, the Fool is dumped. She finds herself alone and lonely in a city where the toilets are uncooperative, the locals make fun of her attempts to speak the language, and her only acquaintance advises her to "dye her pussy hair blond" as a cure for depression. Escaping from a sadomasochistic relationship with Snarky, her teddy bear, the Fool heads for the local dyke bar. "I'm looking for the love that lasts a lifetime," she announces, "but I'll settle for a good fuck." Finding neither, she turns her foolish, generous heart to the city itself, and we leave her singing a paean of love to Amsterdam.

Clad in a ruffled orange dress, kitschy jewelry, and very visible makeup, the Fool appears a clownish middle-class matron, clueless and rather straight-except-for-who-she-sleeps-with. It's an unfortunate choice of costume, because it allows the audience to deny recognizing ourselves in the Fool and the Fool in ourselves. Overall, however, "One Fool" is a fine, brave, and funny piece of work.

Spare Tyre's Clair Chapman, Harriet Powell, and Katina Noble draw on their own lives for "Laugh Lines," a gently humorous look at aging. (This London collective is directed by Tasha Fairbanks, also of Siren.) "Don't call it aging, call it...leaving 30." Playing themselves, their mothers, and themselves-playing-their-mothers, they poke fun at parental expectations versus the unexpected realities, the requirements for being a grown-up, social pressures and political situations. Katina parodies her own privileged class background and liberalism; Harriet provides a wry treatise on the rewards of motherhood; and Clair dissects her bad old straight days: "I thought Mr. Right was bad but Mr. Right-On was a nightmare!"

It was mildly distressing to see Clair's material focus almost exclusively on her sexuality and coming out while non-gay Harriet and Katina portray more concern about fulfilling their artistic aspirations; the unintentional subtext reads as if lesbians had little identity beyond our lesbianism. On the other hand, there was a bravery similar to Terry Baums' in this self-revelatory material. I was especially touched by the conclusion, in which the three explain just how wrong their mothers were to insist that "it's just a phase." Harriet says she has been unmarried to the same man for 17 years, Katina reports that she has been living communally for 16 years, and Clair tells us

she has been a lesbian for 15 months.

"Laugh Lines" does not offer any earth-shaking insights, and in fact much of it feels somewhat old hat, but this endearing well-acted feminist entertainment does provide a good time. The musical numbers are bright and bouncy, and Clair's Dylanesque "A Million Billion Lemmings Can't Be Wrong," the hit of the evening, complete with lemming masks, would be worth the ticket price alone:

I said, I've given everything I got /warmth, affection, support, sex, security, and positive reinforcement/to name but a few/and there's not a whole lot coming back/What do I get from you?/ He said/A billion heterosexuals can't be wrong baby/A billion heterosexuals can't be wrong/I'll provide the sex til the end/Get the other stuff from a friend/Cause a billion heterosexuals can't be wrong....

"Muffet inna all a wi (Muffet is in all of us)" was one of two productions closing the Women in Theatre Festival (see review of Lily O. this page). Sistren, a Jamaican working-class women's theatre collective, is committed to "advancing the awareness of [primarily Caribbean working-class] audiences on questions affecting Caribbean women." A reggae musical infused with Caribbean spirituality and mythology, "Muffet" turns the traditional nursery rhyme on its head in examining sexual violence and female courage.

In this version, Muffet is Everywoman, and in the a-play-within-a-play, three Muffets tell their stories as part of a reggae band contest. The male D.J. also functions as Anansi, the Spider/Trickster, in this case a symbol of patriarchy at large, and as other, more specific embodiments of sexism and constraining tradition. The three Muffets grapple with sexist violence at home, at work, and on the street, with varying degrees of success, depending on the degree to which each makes common cause with other women. Unfortunately, the women's moment of triumph — when they strike at the factory, and in the larger play dump the snide D.J. — flashes by too quickly, especially when weighed against the sustained scenes of violence against women. I wish we could have had more time to enjoy their well-earned victory.

As "Muffet" is performed in patwah (the Caribbean tongue also known as patois), the detailed program guide was invaluable to the many non-patwah speaking audience members. Even though the evening was occasionally comparable to seeing a foreign film without subtitles — while the native speakers next to you are cracking up every minute at another hilarious punchline you've missed — energy and interest ran high. Hot music (and what a pleasure to see women in the band!), vibrant theatre, Beverly Hanson's extraordinary performance as the Trickster/D.J., and good politics made for a blend that couldn't miss.

All in all, the productions this year were of high quality. They also offered lesbian visibility, humor galore, and even — despite the festival's avowedly non-feminist stance — some progressive political content. In its fourth year, the Women in Theatre Festival may have finally hit its stride. □

From occupied
Northern Ireland to
the lesbian country-
western circuit to
Jamaican reggae
drama



Charabanc Theatre Co. in **Somewhere Over the Balcony**

Rutgers

Continued from page 1

academic futures by boycotting the courses, added Garzon.

Umpierre, who continues her work at home despite being banned from the university library, said, "we are in the midst of nowhere again." She said that her future at the college is uncertain and may take months to settle.

□ filed from Boston

Partners

Continued from page 1

unmarried and married couples made in the earlier legislation has been dropped. The 1982 proposal stated that wherever the term "married" was found in San Francisco law, the term "domestic partners" could be substituted.

When domestic partners legislation was introduced to San Francisco in 1982, Archbishop John Quinn predicted it would have "far reaching and very basic implications of a moral and cultural nature." Quinn said he believed these implications would be "severely inimical to marriage and the family — which are the foundations of society." Many others, including the Black Baptist Ministers' Association, joined Quinn in denouncing the legislation as anathematic to societal norms.

Attorney Matt Coles, the author of both the 1982 and 1988 proposals, said, "This legislation is a recognition that society is changing. Many people — gay and straight — are looking less toward marriage as the defining institution. People are creating their own relationships. This legislation is a historic beginning, as it gives government a way to react to these changes."

The '82 proposal received national and international attention. Britt was even interviewed by Radio Iceland and debated Jerry Falwell on ABC-TV.

No prior legislation so greatly challenged the heterosexual community in San Francisco to recognize its "alternative families." Not only was the policy alleged to have significant economic costs, but it represented a dramatic shift away from governmental privilege accorded to the traditional married couple.

Ex-mayor Feinstein, who eventually vetoed the legislation passed by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, said she spent weeks agonizing over her decision. Generally considered to be a supporter of gay causes at the time, Feinstein's electability rested to some degree upon the continued support of San Francisco's gay voters. (Feinstein became mayor in 1978 after Supervisor Dan White murdered Mayor George Moscone and openly-gay Supervisor Harvey Milk.) However, the pressure upon her to veto was enormous. In addition to the Health Service Board and four of the private health plans providing services to city employees, all three major San Francisco newspapers came out against the resolution; editorials and columnists claimed the city was being manipulated by a radical fringe of the gay community.

Today the atmosphere in San Francisco has changed. The gay community has an aura of political respectability. And with 20-30 percent of the votes, it constitutes one of the most powerful voting blocs in the city. Although the major newspapers are still withholding judgment, and appear unlikely to support the legislation, the Board of Supervisors, newly-elected Mayor Art Agnos and other high-ranking city officials have come out in favor of the proposal. According to one of Supervisor Britt's aides, endorsements are expected from many church groups in the city as well.

The major questions facing the current legislation are more pragmatic — specifically, how much will it cost and will the city's Human Rights Commission have the resources necessary to enforce the legislation?

No one is quite sure what the economic implications of the policy will be. Some have argued that the larger the pool of people covered by a group insurance policy, the lower its rates will be. However, with the addition of older relatives to the groups eligible for coverage, and with AIDS affecting up to 20 percent of the city's gay population in the next five years, it is possible that everyone's premiums will go up. Insurance companies will likely argue that they are particularly at risk of financial losses with

AIDS, because unlike pregnancy or other pre-existing medical conditions, insurance companies in California are not allowed to test for HIV, the virus thought by many to be the cause of AIDS.

The city's Human Rights Commission (HRC), which would be responsible for enforcing compliance with the proposed legislation, is already "underfunded and overburdened" according to the San Francisco *Sentinel*. HRC employees have stated that they don't know how the agency could handle the additional caseload brought on by this legislation without more staffing. However, with San Francisco now \$150 million in debt, departmental growth seems unlikely.

The legislation will continue to be discussed over the next few months, and, according to its sponsor, Harry Britt, it is open for revision. □

Indecent

Continued from page 3

p.m. as the "safe harbor" — the time after which questionable material may be aired. "Children are in the audience all the time.... At some point the government can't be a nanny anymore," said attorney Steve Bookshester of the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) — one of the plaintiffs in the suit. The suit calls the FCC's ruling "contrary to public interest, improperly drawn, vague, [with] no place in free, over-the-air broadcasting."

"It's very hard for broadcasters to comply if they don't know what the ruling is," said Bookshester. "It's like not knowing where the edge of the cliff is, so lawyers advise clients to stay-the-hell-back — a lot further than they would otherwise." He said the ruling's impact on arts programming, documentaries, and news — not on raucous AM drive-time shows — is the NAB's main concern. "Bleeps all over the place would be more offensive than the words." The suits ask the court to order the FCC to define what constitutes "indecent material" and "community standards."

Marita Rivera, general manager of Pacifica's WPFW-FM in Washington, said of the legal action, "We do have to question any area of law that is so undefined that it gives people the impression on the air they need to wipe out of their consciousness material that ordinarily would be enriching, helpful and inspiring."

The April indecency decision caught her staff "really flat-footed" said Rivera. Volunteer programmers had to consider innuendo, "what listeners might think," so they practiced self-censorship, she said. "In a climate when licenses could be at risk, this is the big chill."

On "Sophie's Parlor," an 8:30 p.m. program dealing with feminist issues, WPFW staff questioned airing an interview during the October 1987 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights with Joanne Loulan — "the Dr. Ruth of lesbian sex," said Rivera. "That would have been a very hairy program; how would you do it? Is the subject matter of interest to the audience? Of course. Is she well-known in her field? Yes. Can she get on the air? I don't know. 'Let's pull her off,'" was the programmer's decision, said Rivera.

Singers Bette Midler, Bessie Smith, Billie Holiday and others with special appeal but little or no exposure were censored by WPFW programmers, said Rivera. "We felt very keenly about this, particularly as broadcasters serving minority communities. There are so few of us out there, if we didn't play them, no one else would." WPFW is one of about 15 stations in the U.S. that are "minority managed" by Blacks, Native American and Latino staffs, Rivera said.

Oral arguments for the appeal for clarification brought by NAB and 15 others are set for June. No gay or lesbian group has joined the suit, but gay poet Allen Ginsberg is listed as a "friend of the court."

The suit questions, "how you have due process when people don't understand the standard?" said Bookshester. The FCC declined to set a broad range of indecency but will apply "a generic definition to specific broadcasts," explained Bozelli, adding "after all, Carlin is up to, what, 630 words now?" □

REAL PAPER AWARDS

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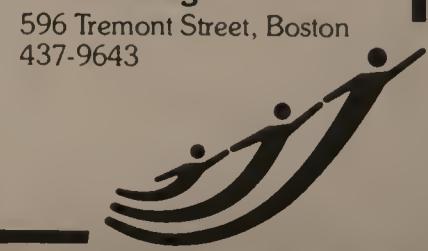
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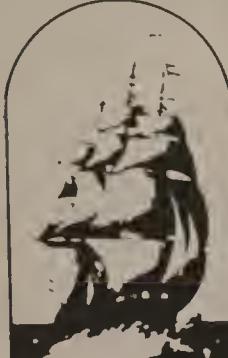


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MODES OF RESIS- TANCE

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AT BREAKFAST WITH GINGER SPARRON & LOIS...
"THE FBI INVESTIGATION WAS BEGUN IN
1981 AFTER ALLEGATIONS, NEVER PROVED,
THAT CISPES' MEMBERS HAD PROVIDED
ILLEGAL MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO
LEFTIST GUERRILLAS IN ELSALVADOR."

JEEZIZ! I MEAN, COME ON! IT'S PRAC-
TICALLY ALL THE LOCAL CISPES OFFICE
CAN DO TO PAY THE RENT AND MAYBE
GET TOGETHER A CARTON OF BAND
AIDS AND ASPIRIN TO SEND DOWN TO
A CLINIC...

MEANWHILE, RONNIE'S BEEN
ILLEGALLY GIVING ZILLIONS IN
MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO
RIGHTIST GUERRILLAS IN
NICARAGUA...

IT'S ENOUGH
TO MAKE YOU
TOSS YOUR
GRANOLA

I ALSO SEE HERE THAT THE
CONTRA ADO VOTE IS COMING
UP IN A FEW DAYS. WHAT'RE
WE GONNA DO ABOUT IT?

WRITE OUR REPRESENTATIVES!
GAYS AND LESBIANS FOR JESSE
JACKSON IS HAVING A
LETTER-WRITING PARTY
TONIGHT.

WHAT'LL THAT ACCOMPLISH? IT'S
RIDICULOUS THAT REAGAN'S EVEN
ASKING FOR THIS MONEY! WE
SHOULD ALL DROP WHAT WE'RE DOING
GO TO D.C. AND CHAIN OURSELVES
TO THE CAPITOL DOORS!

NO, NO, NO. THAT'S JUST MISDIRECTED
ENERGY! I THINK WE SHOULD ALL
HAVE A MEDITATION RITUAL AND
SEND CONGRESS A HEAVY DOSE
OF WHITE LIGHT!

AW, SPARRON! DON'T GIVE ME THAT UPP-
MIDDLE CLASS NEW AGE TWADDLE! THE
ONLY WAY TO EFFECT CHANGE IS THROUGH
DIRECT ACTION, NOT WEARING EXPENSIVE
CRYSTALS AROUND OUR NECKS!

THE "DEMOCRATIC PROCESS" IS
TOTALLY CORRUPT! NOTHING CAN
CHANGE UNTIL SOCIETY REALIZES
HOW SICK IT IS! OUR FIRST
RESPONSIBILITY IS TO HEAL
OURSELVES.... THE WORLD
WILL FOLLOW!

WHY DO WE WASTE
OUR ENERGY FIGHT-
ING LIKE THIS?
THEY'VE BEEN INJECTING OUR
TOFU WITH TESTOSTERONE.

* COMMITTEE IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLE OF ELSALVADOR

COMMUNIQUE

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ALTHOUGH SHE IS
EXPECTED TO
OPEN THE DOORS
OF MADAMIN
BOOKS TO THE
PUBLIC IN TEN
MINUTES, MO
IS UNABLE
TO WRENCH
HERSELF
FROM
HARRIET'S
EMBRACES!

CAN'T YOU CALL
LOIS AND HAVE
HER OPEN UP
FOR YOU?

NO, NOT LOIS!
SHE SAW US LAST
NIGHT AND SHE'D
KNOW WHY I WAS
LATE.

SO?

SO KNOWING LOIS,
IT'LL BE ALL OVER
TOWN BY NOON. I'LL
CALL ARIADNE. SHE
OWES ME A FAVOR.

HI, GINGER. IT'S ARIADNE. I HAFTA CANCEL
OUR BRUNCH DATE. I'M WORKING FOR MO
THIS MORNING. NO, I DUNNO... SHE JUST SAID
SOMETHING CAME UP.

MORNING,
GINGER!

HI, NAOMI! SAY,
GUESS WHO DIDN'T
SHOW UP FOR WORK THIS MORNING. AFTER WE
SAW HER AT THE TOPAZ WITH HARRIET
LAST NIGHT... METHINKS THE CHASTE
MAIDEN MO FINALLY GOT LAID!

...ORGANIC BLACK BEANS \$1.55...
HEY, TONI! DIDJA HEAR
ABOUT MO & HARRIET?

HONEY! I PICKED UP
SOME HOT NEWS AT
THE CO-OP!

HEY, LOIS! GUESS
WHO FINALLY DID IT!

MEANWHILE, MO TEARS HERSELF AWAY...

YEAH, I KNOW
SLURP
I'LL BE LATE
AGAIN.

HELLO, MO! YOU LOOK FLUSHED.
JA WORK OUT THIS MORNING OR SOMETHING?
Y'KNOW, I COULD REALLY GET
INTO AN EXERCISE PROGRAM LIKE YOURS!

GREAT, LOIS. GREAT. I'M
REALLY IMPRESSED. I
THINK THIS COMMUNITY
JUST SET THE LAND
SPEED RECORD FOR
GOSSIP MONGERING!

DETAILS!
I WANT
DETAILS!

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Latino PWA Loren Laureano

NAPWA

Continued from page 3

diverse as NAPWA. Composed of 40 percent people of color and 20 percent women, the NAPWA board of directors is also striving to increase minority representation in local PWA coalitions springing up across the country, according to Beck.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, nearly 40 percent of PWAs in this country are Black or Latino.

Laureano pointed out that although the newly-formed committee was created to address the concerns of women and people of color, it is empowered only to "recommend" to the board ways of reaching out to people of color and women with AIDS.

Laureano singled out for criticism several board members who resisted the creation of the MAC and who suggested instead that the board deal with "reverse discrimination." "That doesn't wash," said Laureano. "It's just a knee-jerk reaction to what we are trying to achieve. We can only do so much talking, at some point we need action."

Laureano also called for a national association of people of color with AIDS. "There should be no talking down to people of color. We must protest. Only [by forming an independent group] will we have an organization that is accountable to our community," he said. Laureano said that even if the NAPWA board agrees to the MAC recommendations, the unique needs of people of color are often better served in their own organizations.

PWA organizations for people of color help support and politicize people of color with AIDS, explained Laureano. Only organizations for people of color can provide a completely safe environment, where they "come out and become community workers," said Laureano. He said that fighting racism in white-run organizations only adds to the burden people of color with AIDS must already face.

Since PWAs are often stigmatized in minority communities, said Laureano, many PWAs hide their symptoms from friends and family. In addition, lack of access to medical care often delays diagnosis of AIDS among people of color, resulting in a much shorter life expectancy than that for most white gay men with AIDS.

Beck said NAPWA would not stand in the way of a national association of people of color with AIDS. "NAPWA is not interested in turf battles or ownership issues. The issue is not building an empire. The issue is that PWAs should address issues as they feel fit. If that means another organization — I don't know. But too many in this community take time for turf battles," said Beck.

Beck stated NAPWA has made considerable progress organizing PWAs into a

strong political group and has reached out to women and people of color, despite the fact that PWAs active on the NAPWA board and with local organizations regularly "get sick, burn out or die." Added Beck "We are accessible to everyone which adds to our strength. We are making small steps, but the word is going out." He said that NAPWA spends nearly half its travel budget each year to send people of color to AIDS conferences around the country.

Laureano said while organizations such as NAPWA appear on paper to have made great strides reaching out to minority communities, people of color are still "desperate for services" and organizations where they feel comfortable.

Beck said "We are talking here about a process, not a theoretical revolution because in reality revolutions are always a process. NAPWA is not the only solution, but we are helping to address the problem."

Black PWA Larry Ellis, a NAPWA board member, said that NAPWA has done an adequate job reaching out to people of color. "NAPWA strives to be geographically and demographically diverse by encouraging PWAs to come together — outreach is ongoing," said Ellis. He added that as AIDS continues to spread beyond the gay community, NAPWA has tried to represent the entire PWA community. "We're responding well to the broader array of people afflicted with AIDS," said white board member Alan Kucones from Boston.

Anyone interested in a national organization for people of color with AIDS may contact Laureano at Box 980261, Houston, Texas 77089. NAPWA may be reached at 2025 Eye Street NW, Washington DC 20006.

□ filed from Boston

Run

Continued from page 3

da. Sponsorship for Feminization of Power has rolled in from an enormous number of organizations, representing a broad range of political perspectives.

"The response to the campaign has far exceeded our expectations," says Peg Yorkin, producer of the national tour. "In most cities, our event was the largest feminist gathering since the 1977 National Women's Conferences. The enthusiasm and outpour-

...slogans included "Teach Peace," "Ordain Women or Stop Baptizing Them" and "Clitzpah."

ing of support shows that the time for this campaign is long overdue."

Indeed, for women who concur that power comes through holding elected office, Smeal's scheme heralds a kind of mass exultation only hinted at by Geraldine Ferraro's vice-presidential run in '84. Now a national support network is mobilizing to enforce the Feminist Majority plan: "Before the candidate filing date, the performance of all candidates in an area should be reviewed. If no feminists are running for a given office, Candidate Search Teams should be organized to find a competent feminist to run.

"Win or lose, we will allow no more free rides — no longer will we let reactionary incumbents go unchallenged in primaries or general elections. The goal is to make sure that dedicated, dynamic feminists are running."

Hobnobbing in the Hub

Boston hosted the ninth stop of "Take the Power" on March 28 at the glitzy Park Plaza Hotel. Organizers were pleasantly surprised by the large turnout of nearly 1500 people, most of whom were white, business-attired women. As young women in raspberry-pink Feminization of Power t-shirts scurried to dig up more chairs and printed programs, participants milled about the ballroom talking and perusing exhibits. A smorgasbord of political groups distributed literature, including the Greater Boston Lesbian and Gay Political Alliance (GBL/GPA), the Boston Area Rape Crisis Center and the General Electric Boycott organization. Voters were registered and other t-shirted volunteers sold bumper stickers and buttons whose slogans included

"Teach Peace," "Ordain Women or Stop Baptizing Them" and "Clitzpah." A favorite button (also in the raspberry-pink motif) simply reads "5%" — announcing the dearth of women in U.S. Congress.

A highlight of the pre-show offerings was an historical photographic exhibit called "Women in Power," compiled by Toni Carabillo, Judith Meuli and June Bundy Csida. Photos accompanied by brief descriptions honor the lives of prominent women officials like Barbara Jordan (D-Texas, 1972-78), the first southern Black woman elected to the House; Frances Perkins, (Secretary of Labor, 1933-45), the first woman in the U.S. cabinet; and Gro Harlem Brundtland, prime minister of Norway.

The photo show is one traveling staple of the Feminization of Power campaign. Also on the tour are the films and music of veteran feminist Kay Weaver. Beckoned by the taped strains of "Sisters are doing it for themselves," attendees gathered at the main stage to clap and dance to Weaver's opening song, "Fired Up." Next, her inspirational film about women's triumphs called "One Fine Day" brought the crowd to its feet to cheer on the speechmakers: Smeal, Yorkin, Massachusetts Lt. Gov. Evelyn Murphy and Margaret Burnham, former Municipal Court judge.

"We are fed up," bellowed Smeal to the Bostonians. "We are tired of voting for the lesser of two evils. The way to win — while we fight against the erosion of our rights everywhere — is to go on the offensive. To make change, profound change."

"If we are ever to turn around the disastrous trends now threatening our nation...if we are ever to stop the feminization of poverty...then we must have a Feminization of Power."

Emphasizing that even mainstream pundits claim more than half of U.S. women identify as feminists, Smeal urged women to take the risk of running for office. The other speakers also stressed the need for further grasping of power. While Murphy entreated the crowd to chant, "We must run, we must win," Smeal carried the momentum with assertions like, "A movement for social agendas for women just isn't going to be stopped." And as spirits soared among many of the gathered feminists, Weaver belted out a bawdy country ditty.

She crooned: "Treat me like a woman, but pay me like a man....there's only one distinction, you're paid double if you're hung."

Boston's Feminization of Power extravaganza seemed to focus efforts on a bandwagon-style appeal for support. The ideas were general, and the politics, while claiming to be inclusive, were also vague. Lesbian issues were not mentioned at all until a woman in the audience yelled out, "What about the L word?" as Smeal spoke of other concerns not addressed by male politicians. Thereafter, Smeal included lesbian/gays rights among a catch-all list of political priorities. The AIDS epidemic was referred to only amidst a general condemnation of political bigotry.

The literature distributed by Feminization of Power organizers is more specific, though it presumes the most effective means of change is through electoral politics. Well-researched statements document the pro-feminist effects of some legislative reforms, but no discussions are included about the dangers of perpetuating a movement dominated by white, heterosexual, middle-class women. Some women leaving the Boston event were visibly moved; others expressed bemusement with the traveling feminist variety show. Others, however, seemed alienated by the glitz, rhetoric and homogeneity. The tour marches from city to city, eerily paralleling the '88 presidential campaign's continuing masculinization of power. □

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ON OUR BACKS, the sexual entertainment magazine for lesbians, is 48 pages of erotic fiction, features, plus timely sexual advice and news columns. We are quarterly, national, unique and provocative. \$15/yr sub or \$5 current issue to: On Our Backs, PO Box 421916, San Francisco, CA 94142. (ex)

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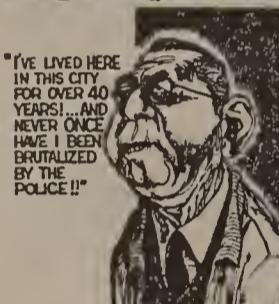
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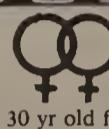
Prisoners Seeking Friends

TO ALL THOSE, IN & OUT OF PRISON, WHO FIGHT AGAINST THEIR BONDAGE.

Alexander Berkman. *Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist*



"I'VE LIVED HERE IN THIS CITY FOR OVER 40 YEARS!...AND NEVER ONCE HAVE I BEEN BRUTALIZED BY THE POLICE!!"



I'm an attractive 30 yr old female, pretty black skin, looking for a mature woman to share my thoughts and interests with and one that can accept the fact that I'm currently incarcerated. I enjoy music, dancing, and some sports. My occupation used to be nursing. Sincerely, your friend, Queen Esther MOSES, 738823, PO Box 8540 (455), Pembroke Pines FL 33024.

Lesbian Dyke looking for a female person to correspond with and build a friendship with. Not supposed to write other prisoners, but if your mail isn't 'stamped' I should get it. Age no difference. Cindy JOHNSON, 110615, Box 11492-EHU, Oklahoma City OK 73136.

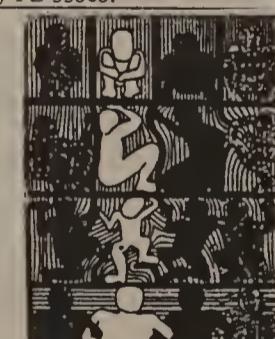


Need a friend and penpal. 32 yr old prisoner, would like same sex. Can't write other prisoners. Write Denny POTTER, Box B-3600072B, Anamosa IA 52205.

Black, well hung, enjoy sports, traveling and would like to hear from serious minded people for conversation and loving. Race not important. Not looking for fakes or \$\$. Can't write other prisoners. Justin BLACK, Y-9831, Drawer K, Dallas PA 18612.

This is an URGENT appeal for some medical advice or references. I'm having terrible stomach pains, diagnosed as Irritable Bowel Syndrome and I need to know what foods are high in FIBER. Please write Farrell JONES, 33554, (4D-24), 1012 W. Columbia, Farmington MO 63640.

IF YOU WANT PEACE, WORK FOR JUSTICE



A poem
"Though you're so far away,
I can honestly say

My prison is not what it seems

When I picture you in my dreams."

I need someone to write. Tim GRIMALDI, 11013, Box 7000, Carson City NV 89702

Gay male, 34, disappearing brown hair, seeks correspondents. Interests? I'm a person that enjoys building/creating: houses, decks, poems, and paintings. I'm not a person for crowds or parties. Philip GILLESPIE, 67480, Unit 29F, Parchman MS 38738.

I have been gay almost 6 years now although I don't see anything wrong by being gay because if that what turns that persons sex needs on well who gives a hell with them people out there because I'm going to do what I feel that turns me on. But the other reason I am writing is because I am so longly at this time and no one to talk to but these walls. I just want to be a free lady to do the things I want. My ass is big and will turn any old man on. I'm good at what I do, and getting better as I go! Please write me. Robin PHILLIPS, 343236, Rt 1 Box 16, Lovelady TX 75851.

getting it together



9 SATURDAY 10 SUNDAY

16 Saturday Libana's annual spring concert. Somerville Theatre. 8pm. Info: 625-1081.

9 Saturday

Boston Conference on Women and AIDS: "Our Communities Respond." Sponsored by Fenway Community Health Center. Suffolk U., 55 Temple St. 8am-6:30pm. \$45, sliding fee scale available. Info: 267-1538.

Boston "Something about the Women" features WINGS — Women's International News Gathering Service tape. WMFO 91.5FM. 10am-2pm.

Boston Living With AIDS Theatre Project presents a workshop to collect the experiences and stories of those connected in any way with the AIDS crisis every Saturday. The goal is to create a theater music piece based on the workshop material. No performance experience necessary. Club Cabaret, 209 Columbus Ave. 10:30am.

Boston Brian Willson speaks about U.S. intervention in Central America. Sponsored by CASA and Veterans for Peace. Faneuil Hall. 1pm. Info: 492-8699.

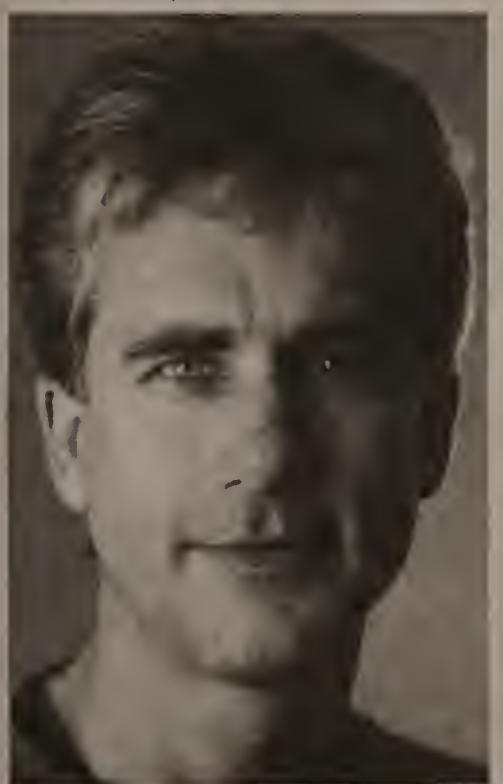
Jamaica Plain Party for the Nicaragua-U.S. Labor Friendship Tour with CASA. Wheelchair accessible. Firehouse Multicultural Arts Center, 659 Centre St. 9pm-1:30am. Info: 492-8699.

Boston Kate Clinton performs at Club Cabaret at the Club Cafe, 209 Columbus Ave. Through 4/15. Ticket prices vary. Info: 536-0972.

Cambridge Women's School class "Women and Disability." The Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 10am-4pm. Free. Info: 354-8807.

Boston 12th Annual Artists' Ball. Masquerade theme: "Tooloose through the Looking Glass." Featuring costume competition and the Fat City Band. Cyclorama, 539 Tremont St. 8pm-1am. \$15 in advance, \$18 at door. Info: 443-8871.

Cambridge Women's Theological Center benefit dance and fundraiser. Featuring jazz vocalist Paula Elliott. Episcopal Divinity School, Washburn Hall, 99 Brattle St. 8-12pm. \$8-12. Info: 277-1330.



16 Saturday Mykolas Hazen leads Body Electric massage healing group.

Framingham Framingham State College Gays and Friends Organization hosts a dance. Open to all 100 State St., on FSC campus. 9pm-1am. \$1.

Boston Friends of Dignity/Boston Rite of Spring Dance. Creative attire suggested. Costume and door prizes, DJ. YWCA auditorium, 140 Clarendon St. 9pm-1am. (Pre-dance costume "workshop" 6-9pm.) \$10 in advance, \$12 at door. Info: 536-6518.

Henniker, NH "April Dances for Gay Dollars" fundraising event for New Hampshire's first Gay Pride Day scheduled for June 25. Featuring "Kid Sister" and live DJ. Sponsored by Citizens Alliance for Gay & Lesbian Rights. Pat's Peak, Rt. 114. 8pm-1am. \$5.

Cambridge Lesbian singles discuss "Attractions to Unavailable Women." DOB, Old Cambridge Baptist Church, 1151 Mass. Ave. 7pm. \$1. Info: 661-3633.

10 Sunday

Jamaica Plain Lesbian and Gay Neighbors potluck dinner. Speaker from New England Names Project. Please bring a dish to share and a non-alcoholic beverage. First Church Unitarian, corner Eliot & Centre Sts. 4-7pm. Info: Liz 522-3894, Kenn 522-6253.

Boston Metro Healing presents ongoing healing group for PWAs and all those wishing to be of support. Meets every Sunday. Metropolitan Health Club aerobics room, 209 Columbus Ave. 7:30-9:30pm. Info: Brian 267-1154, Joseph 357-6926.

Haverhill Lesbians of the Merrimack Valley meet for potluck, socializing and discussion of future events. Bring a dish to share. 6:30pm. Info: 521-2239.

Cambridge Men of All Colors Together — Boston holding a discussion session on Act-Out with Fred Frens. Phillip Brooks House, Harvard Yard. 1-3:30pm. Info: 266-4378.

Brookline Brookline-Brighton-Allston lesbians potluck dinner and videos. 6pm. Info: 566-0183.

Boston Jazz Women in Concert series presents Janet Grice, jazz bassoonist, and ensemble. Wheelchair accessible. Cultural Center at Villa Victoria, 85 W. Newton St. 3pm (\$5), 8pm (\$8). Info: 397-8311.

Dorchester Dorchester GALA potluck dinner at Dennis's. 7pm. Info: 282-2962 or 282-7822.

Boston Boston's Other Voice special guest Shiva Barton, naturopathic doctor. WROR 98.5FM. 12:30am (Monday morning).

11 Monday

Boston Names Project New England chapter quilting bee. Help available for starting new panels. Arlington St. Church, Boylston St. entrance. 6-9pm. Info: 451-9003.

Boston Safe sex workshop for gay and bisexual men with Janice Irvine, Ph.D. BU Student Center Rm. 315, 775 Commonwealth Ave. 7:30pm. Info: 353-9808.

Boston Boston NOW's Economic Equity Taskforce meeting. 971 Commonwealth Ave. 7pm. Info: 782-1056.

12 Tuesday

Natick Training begins for emergency hotline volunteers working with battered women and victims of sexual assault. Sessions continue until May 24. West Suburban YWCA, 251 West Central St. Info: 653-4464, 235-5613.

Cambridge Lesbian coming-out rap. DOB, Old Cambridge Baptist Church, 1151 Mass. Ave. 8pm. \$1. Info: 661-3633.

Boston Boston NOW's Reproductive Rights Taskforce meeting. 971 Commonwealth Ave. 7pm. Info: 782-1056.

13 Wednesday

Boston Mass. Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus hosts Gay and Lesbian Civil Rights Bill Lobby Day. Workshops and orientation start at 9:30am at 25 Beacon St., then move to the State House for afternoon appointments with legislators. Info: 262-1565.

Cambridge "Say It, Sister" discussion of "The Lure of Soap Operas" with Karen Lindsey and a member of "Two in Twenty," a lesbian soap opera. WMBR, 88.1FM. 7-8pm.

Cambridge Boston Mobilization for Survival presents "The Uprising in the West Bank — An Eyewitness Report" by Marty Rosenbluth, West Bank resident. Wheelchair accessible. MIT room 4-270. 7:30pm. \$3. Info: 354-0008.

Boston Boston NOW's Lesbian Rights Taskforce meeting. 971 Commonwealth Ave. 7pm. Info: 782-1056.

14 Thursday

Cambridge Newcomers' group. DOB, 2nd floor west, Old Cambridge Baptist Church, 1151 Mass. Ave. 8pm. \$1. Info: 661-3633.

Boston GCN's production night. All welcome. Proofreading: starts 5PM. Paste-up: after 7PM. 62 Berkeley St., near Arlington & Back Bay T-stops. GCN: 426-4469.

Cambridge Am Tikva Holocaust Memorial Service "Yom HaShoah," in remembrance of all Jews, gays, and Lesbians consumed by the fires of the Holocaust. MIT Chapel (in front of Kresge Auditorium), 43 Mass. Ave. 7:30pm. Info: 782-8894.

Boston Boston Lesbian and Gay Pride Planning Committee meets every Thursday. Rm. 801, Boston City Hall, Congress St. entrance. 7pm. Info: 267-2113.

Cambridge Lesbians Choosing Children Network topic: "The Decision to Parent." The Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 7:30pm. Free. Info: 354-8807 (TTY/voice).

15 Friday

Boston Ongoing healing group for PWAs and all those wishing to be of support. Meets every Friday. Santa Fe Hair Salon, 528 Tremont St. 7:30-9:30pm. Info: Brian 267-1154, Joseph 357-6926.

Boston GCN mailing. Come help stuff the paper and meet new friends. 5pm to 10pm. Near Arlington and Back Bay T-stops. Info: GCN, 426-4469.

Cambridge Women's coffeehouse features Sparky Allison, folk/country/rock singer. The Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 8pm-midnight. Free. Info: 354-8807 (TTY/voice).

Cambridge "Women's Rights as Human Rights: Possibilities and Contradictions." Annual Harvard Law School Human Rights Program conference, with film and discussion at 7:30pm Friday, and Symposium Saturday, 9am-6:30pm. Pound Hall, Harvard Law School. Info: 495-9362.

Worcester AIDS Project — Worcester support group meets every Friday night for HIV positive, PWA's, PWAC's, lovers, friends, and the worried well. Open to all lesbians and gay men regardless of HIV status. 51 Jackson St. 7-9pm. Info: Dana, 755-3773.

16 Saturday

Boston "Sex and the Older Gay Male." Lecture/discussion. Prime Timers Club. All older gay men welcome. Lindemann Health Center, Revere Room, 25 Staniford St. 2-4pm. Info: Box 352, Reading, MA.

Boston "Body Electric: Healing with Group Sensual Massage" for gay and bisexual men, led by Mykolas Hazen. 7:30pm. \$12. Info: 522-9164.

Boston Living With AIDS Theatre Project presents a workshop to collect the experiences and stories of those connected in any way with the AIDS crisis every Saturday. The goal is to create a theater music piece based on the workshop material. No performance experience necessary. Club Cabaret, 209 Columbus Ave. 10:30am.

Somerville Libana's annual Spring Concert. Somerville Theatre, 55 Davis Square. 8pm. \$10.50 and \$12.50. Info: 625-1081.

Brighton Am Tikva Shabbat study group. 10:30am. Info: Michael, 965-2423.

Worcester Women's Energy Against Violence (WEAVE) presents Sara Laughs to benefit Worcester's annual "Take Back the Night" march scheduled for May 6. YWCA, 1 Salem Sq. 8pm. \$5 in advance, \$6 at door. Info: 798-5450.

Cambridge Women's Theological Center presents "Claiming Possibility: Constructing a Politics of Difference." Bring a bag lunch, beverages provided. Episcopal Divinity School, Washburn Auditorium, 99 Brattle St. 10am-3pm. \$7-10, more if, less if. Info: 277-1330.

Boston Dorchester GALA night at the 1270. 1270 Boylston St. 9:30pm.

17 Sunday

Boston Metro Healing presents ongoing healing group for PWAs and all those wishing to be of support. Meets every Sunday. Metropolitan Health Club aerobics room, 209 Columbus Ave. 7:30-9:30pm. Info: Brian 267-1154, Joseph 357-6926.

Boston Boston's Other Voice special guest Joseph Kramer of The Body Electric School of Massage and Rebirthing. He speaks on "Six Ways to Prolong Orgasm, and Other Sexual Secrets of the East and West." WROR 98.5FM. 12:30am (Monday morning).

**CALENDAR COMPILED BY
TODD HOLLISTER**

Romanovsky and Phillips in concert. Masonic Temple, 1950 Mass. Ave., Cambridge, Mass. April 2.

By Jim Fauntleroy

The Masonic Temple on Mass. Ave. just past Porter Square is not, on the face of it, an ideal place for a concert. The hall features no fewer than eight U.S. flags hanging from the ceiling and a stilled mirror ball that doesn't seem likely to resume twinkling soon. But Saturday's show by Romanovsky and Phillips showed how good performers and an enthusiastic audience can be.

The concert was sponsored by BILGA — the Boston Intercollegiate Lesbian and Gay Alliance. BILGA works to coordinate the activities of Boston-area college gay and lesbian student groups and has done us all a favor by managing to bring Romanovsky and Phillips to Boston for the first time in several years. Several years.

The singers started off with an opening song about opening songs, wearing outfits that provided a quick synopsis of the personalities we would be enjoying for the next few hours. Paul was bright and flashy with his blond hair, rhinestone ensemble and white fringed cowboy jacket. He kept the evening floating on his almost dishy, stream-of-consciousness patter. In contrast, Ron was in basic black, but with silver touches that caught your eye as the evening went on. He waited Paul out and then dropped a quick aside in at just the right place.

The pacing was quirky at first. Each of the songs was separated by a long chat with the audience, mostly from Paul. This was pleasant in a couple of different ways. It gave an informal, spontaneous atmosphere that made the songs seem even more personal than on the recordings. It also allowed the songs to range widely in emotional tone. Paul's light-hearted "Womb Envy" was followed by Ron singing lead for "Family of Lovers," a song about the older man he fell in love with when he was 16.

The topics, too, moved around the map. A comic song about losing your lover to

again," he sighed. "When are we going to get our act together and start saving them?"

While this breadth of view was loving and refreshing, on the whole, the first half of the show was held down by the far-flying style. A mood would grow from one song, be shifted by a contrasting story, and then be changed entirely for the next number. It wasn't until the middle of the second half that things really started rolling and taking on a life of their own.

It started with Ron soloing on "He Wasn't Talking to Me," a quiet and wistful ballad that segued into the upbeat and spiky "Give Me a Man Who's Glad to Be Gay." This was a pride anthem about being gay with a few nudges at those carrying their closets with them to the bars (Straight looking marine seeks/ straight looking cop to please/ How straight can they look/ when they're down on their knees?).

But the emotional high point came with the final song of the regular set, "A Person Living With AIDS." I hope this song will be on their newest album (*Emotional Rollercoaster*, due to be available in fine book and record stores) in a couple of months. The song talked about life going on within a fight with AIDS and captured many of the personal twists that come from living during this epidemic.

All of Romanovsky and Phillips' songs are intimate, often with a single instrument accompanying their voices. But with this song and the encores, the entire hall was drawn into the circle without losing that sense of an individual's emotions and cares being expressed. The three encores ranged from the title song of the new album, featuring audience participation screams down the rollercoaster, to the bouncy "Trouble in Paradise" with playful asides of "guess who?" during its description of the ups and downs of a gay couple.

The evening was friendly, open, political, funny, sexy, and a delight.

Intimate entertainment

A playful evening with Romanovsky and Phillips



Romanovsky and Phillips

Irene Young

AT&T and phone sex was followed by a story about how coming out can provide wonderful teaching experiences. "Womb Envy's" longing for the joys of giving birth was followed by Paul describing how few men had the nerve to raise their hands when he used to ask how many in the audience

could identify with him. Finally one night three women raised their hands. Paul thought they hadn't gotten the point of his question, but, as they explained to him afterwards, they were acting in solidarity with their brothers who were too shy to express themselves. "Saved by the lesbians

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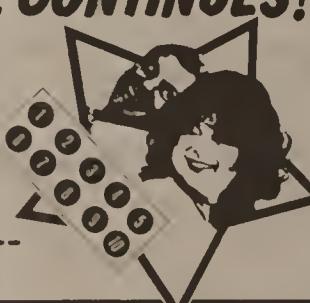
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SATURDAY, APRIL 9th.

POLYESTER, THE DIANE LINKLETTER STORY, DIVINE WATERS, MULTIPLE MANIACS 1:00---5:30---10:00

SUNDAY, APRIL 10th.

POLYESTER, THE DIANE LINKLETTER STORY, DIVINE WATERS, FEMALE TROUBLE 1:00---5:30

FEMALE TROUBLE only 10:15pm

MONDAY, APRIL 11th & TUESDAY, APRIL 12th.

POLYESTER, THE DIANE LINKLETTER STORY, DIVINE WATERS, PINK FLAMINGOS 1:00---5:30

PINK FLAMINGOS only 10:15pm

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13th.

POLYESTER, THE DIANE LINKLETTER STORY, DIVINE WATERS, LUST IN THE DUST 1:00---5:30

LUST IN THE DUST only 10:15pm

THURSDAY, APRIL 14th.

POLYESTER, THE DIANE LINKLETTER STORY, DIVINE WATERS, TROUBLE IN MIND 1:00---5:45

TROUBLE IN MIND only 10:20pm

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